


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HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF
Armenia and the Armenians

IN ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES,

WITH

SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PRESENT CRISIS.

BY
AN OLD INDIAN.



LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1896.

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PREFACE.

THE author of these Historical Sketches has drawn his information from a variety of sources, only a few of the chief of which are indicated in the course of the narrative. Every care, however, has been taken to verify all statements. The portions of the work directly relating to Armenia and the Armenians have had the advantage of having been revised, as to facts and dates, by an Armenian scholar, an expert in this subject, as it was passing through the press.

He thus writes, at date, as to the present situation and cheerless outlook for his wretched countrymen: 'What about the next winter, when the snow once more cuts off communications and the Kurd and the Turk are the sole masters of the situation, without even a watching eye to disturb them? . . . It makes one more than sick to think of it all.'

As these lines are being traced there are tragic indications of a revival of disturbances and massacres, which are the manifest result, in the first instance, of the misgovernment of the Grand

Turk, and in the next, of the apathy of the European concert.

The despatches just submitted to Parliament (Turkey, No. 6, 1896), while sufficiently emphasizing the mistaken policy of certain agitators for reform among the Armenians, yet present us with the most ghastly picture of provincial misrule as the real source of these terrible disorders.

Emphatic testimony is borne in these consular reports to the complicity of the government of the Sultan, whose deliberate policy, it is stated, is to crush and stamp out the Christian population of Asiatic Turkey.

In relation to this state of things, and in proof that the attitude of the present Prime Minister of England has not been misrepresented in these pages, and is still unchanged, we submit a few sentences from his latest utterances on this subject :

‘ I shall be informed that I have threatened the Ottoman Government, and am bound to carry the threats out. I entirely demur to that criticism. . . . A preacher may be very earnest in denouncing sin, but he is not bound to come down from the pulpit to take a big stick and inflict chastisement on the impenitent ; and, therefore, when I say that there is a gangrene in the extremity of Europe, do not assume that I am making any kind of implication that I intend to volunteer the *rôle* of physician to cut it out.’

A. O. I.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

ARMENIA AND THE ARMENIANS IN ANCIENT TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Geographical position of Ancient and Turkish Armenia	
—Historical sketch of the Armenians in earlier times	1—18

CHAPTER II.

The introduction of Christianity into Armenia as the national religion by St. Gregory the Illuminator and his successors in the fourth century—Constitution of the old Armenian Church	19—30
--	-------

CHAPTER III.

Arsacidan and Sassanian dynasties—Religious and literary revival—Translation of the Scriptures by St. Miesrop and St. Isaac—Sketches of Armenian history from the introduction of Christianity by St. Gregory to the rise of the dynasty of the Bagratidæ, A.D. 860	31—5
---	------

CHAPTER IV.

Dynasty of the Bagratidæ—Rupenian kingdom of Cilicia—Relations with the Crusaders—Close of Armenian monarchy	PAGE 51—60
--	---------------

PART II.

ARMENIA AND THE ARMENIANS UNDER TURKISH MISRULE—THE PRESENT CRISIS IN ARMENIA.

CHAPTER I.

The Turks and Saracens—Seljouk Turks—Togrul Beg—Rise of the Ottoman Empire—Fall of Constantinople—Decline of the Ottoman Empire—Position of Armenia	61—76
---	-------

CHAPTER II.

Islam as the religion of the Turk—Youth of Mahomet—Mahomet at Mecca—Temptations of Mahomet—The Sword and the Koran—Influence of Islam on the character and government of the Turk—Forced conversions	77—95
--	-------

CHAPTER III.

Glimpses of Armenian life since the final overthrow of the monarchy on to the beginning of the present century—Persian oppression—Shah Abbas—Armenian patriarchs—Roman Catholic influence—Literary revival of the eighteenth century—Summary	96—104
--	--------

CHAPTER IV.

Political situation in Turkey towards the close of the last, and during the first half of the present, century—Degeneracy of the Turk—Russian advances—Peter the Great—Traditional policy of Russia—Reforming Sultans	PAGE 105—115
---	-----------------

CHAPTER V.

New phases of the Armenian Question—Gradual change of policy of the reforming Turk—Protestant influence—American missions—Conflicting verdicts—Political reforms reviewed—Treaty of Adrianople, 1829—Hatti Sherif, 1839—Protestant Charter, 1850—Hatti Humayoun in view of prospective demands of the Treaty of Paris—Summary	116—127
---	---------

CHAPTER VI.

European concert and its relation to Turkey—Treaty of Paris, 1856—Turkish diplomacy—Young Armenia—National Constitution (1862), and National Commission (1871)—Situation before the Treaty of San Stefano—Cyprus Convention, and Treaty of Berlin (1878)—Sixty-first and Sixty-second Articles—Peace with Honour—Summary	128—149
--	---------

CHAPTER VII.

Position of Armenia after the Treaty of Berlin—Bright prospects—Turkish reforms—Attitude of European concert—Consular reports—Comments of British press—Hamidieh cavalry—Sassoun massacres, 1894—New reforms	150—174
--	---------

CHAPTER VIII.

	PAGE
Renewal of massacres, 1895-96—The Hindchag's Communication to the Embassies—Collective Note—Illustrative cases—Trebizond and Ourfa—Attitude of Prince Lobanoff—Responsibility for the massacres—Relation of the European Powers—The special responsibility of Great Britain—Question not closed—Solutions of the problem—Conclusion -	175—200

ERRATA.

Page 27 (line 3) delete sentence beginning—' It is further, &c.'

Page 27 (line 13). For sentence beginning ' The dioceses, &c., —read, 'The chief dignitaries of the Armenian Church are five—*viz.*, the patriarch of Etchmiadzin and Ardaghar in Greater, and Sis in Lesser Armenia, with the titular patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem. The three first named also receive the title of Catholicos.

CHAPTER VIII.

	PAGE
Renewal of massacres, 1895-96—The Hindchag's Communication to the Embassies—Collective Note—Illustrative cases—Trebizond and Ourfa—Attitude of Prince Lobanoff—Responsibility for the massacres— Relation of the European Powers—The special re-	

PART I.

*ARMENIA AND THE ARMENIANS IN ANCIENT
TIMES.*

CHAPTER I.

Geographical position of Ancient and Turkish Armenia—
Historical sketch of the Armenians in earlier times.

THE regions lying in and around the north-east corner of Asia Minor possess a unique historical interest. They are the reputed home of the human race. Across their steppes, with herds and flocks, roamed the nomadic tribes of the patriarchal age. By-and-by comes a movement down to the plains. The arid uplands are exchanged for the fertile valleys of the great rivers.

With the set seasons of agriculture the roving life comes to an end. From the legal relations arising out of a fixed tenure of the land appears the first faint glimmering of citizenship and the State. Contact with the sea introduces a new element. Commerce assumes fresh aspects, and the development of the uplands and of the river valleys reaches its full maturity on the coast.

Here, then, through its three great stages, the advance of civilization has been carried forward. Even at the present day all three stages—the nomadic, the territorial, the maritime—can be

found co-existing where Europe and Asia blend into each other.

On this borderland of two great continents were laid the opening scenes of that abrupt historical transition when, by the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Middle Ages may be supposed to end and modern history to begin. It is with that part of these regions known from ancient times as Armenia, and with its relations to the surrounding countries, that we are now concerned.

It is certainly not the magnitude of the mother-country of the Armenians, for at no time have they possessed any vast territory ; it is not their numbers, for they have never been a great multitude—it is not on either of these accounts that they have come to occupy the prominent position they have held, and still continue to hold, in the history of the world. They have not, like their present masters, the Turks, mustered their hordes of lawless marauders ; they have not spread desolation along their line of march, nor have they set up a rival imperium to the great forces of modern civilization. Yet they assert a position of influence and inherit a prestige which never can be associated with the name of their barbarous oppressors.

Their peculiar claim to a place of honour among the nations lies in their distinctive genius and character, their realization of a principle of national unity, and of a high ideal as to their mission, to which they have clung amid every change, every reverse of fortune.

We purpose to note, however cursorily, some of the moulding influences of this character, as well as some of its heroic achievements.

It cannot, we believe, be without profit that we tread, even in imagination, that ancient realm of noble martyrdoms, of new-born aspirations, and mark the recurring outflashes of spirit which lend their mingled pathos and romantic charm to the history of this remarkable nation.

Armenia looms forth from amid the mists of antiquity a rugged, grim old fortress, often, indeed, beleaguered, but never finally captured.

Ancient Armenia, in its palmyest days, overran, if it did not take possession of, all the range stretching from the Caspian to the Mediterranean Sea. That range includes the wild fastnesses of the Caucasus, what is now the Russian province of Georgia, the mountains, plains and valleys of Turkish Armenia and Anatolia, as well as the maritime regions of the Euxine and the Bosphorus.

Turkish Armenia, to which we now confine our survey, occupies the north-east corner of Asia Minor. It is bounded on the north by the Black Sea and the frontier of Russia, on the east by Russia and Persia, on the west by Anatolia, and on the south by the mountains of Kurdistan. It is distant from Constantinople 600 miles. Its extent from east to west is 430, and its breadth from north to south 300 miles.

The original name Haiasdan was given to

it from the national progenitor, Haig, whom tradition asserts to have been the son of Togarmah, the grandson of Japhet.

Armenia (a later designation, derived, it is said, from one of the old kings, Aram, a descendant of Haig) signifies highland. It is descriptive of the surface of the country, which is mostly an elevated plateau, from 4,000 to 7,000 feet above the level of the sea, sloping downwards towards Persia on the east, and Anatolia on the west. Its aspect, in some of the mountain ranges, suggests an expansion of the grandeur and beauty of the Trossachs. Armenia contains large tracts of plain and valley capable of a high degree of cultivation. The Turkish despot, however, will do nothing worth mentioning to encourage the rayah in his cultivation of the soil, even to enrich himself and his rapacious pashas. The Armenian peasant, therefore, devoid of the appliances of science to his occupation, does not thrive on agriculture.

The soil is rich in minerals such as coal, copper, iron, lead, salt, and naphtha. These, however, until quite recently, the unspeakable Turk would neither work himself nor permit others more competent to do so. Mr. Curzon, who comments on the folly of this dog-in-the-manger policy, bears ample testimony to the existence of boundless coal fields between the Bosphorus and Heraclea, as well as to the facility with which the coal cropping out of the sides of the hills could be obtained.

The country, like the Highlands of Scotland, suffers from a scarcity of wood. The neglect of artificial means of irrigation condemns large portions of the soil to barrenness. But this is redeemed by the fertility of other regions. The products are rice, hemp, flax, cotton, tobacco, grapes, and a variety of fruits. Cattle-rearing is more in favour than agriculture.

The climate of Armenia is temperate and bracing. The Euphrates and Tigris are the principal rivers. Rising in its mountain fastnesses, and uniting at last in the Shat-al-Arab, they pour their waters into the Persian Gulf.

In like manner, the Araxes and Kur, rising in the same centre, after traversing divergent routes, unite in discharging their waters in one vast volume into the Caspian Sea. Other streams, such as the Jorokh and Rion, or Phasis, drain Armenia in the direction of the Black Sea.

Along the banks of the two larger historic rivers, the Euphrates and Tigris, even in the absence of irrigation, vineyards and garden landscapes meet the eye, giving the observant student of Scripture some remote conception of the extent and delights of the far-off Edenic paradise.

The natural guardian of Armenia is Agri-dagh, or the ancient Ararat, rising in the east to the height of 17,260 feet. It is known among the natives and others as Noah's Mountain. A fondly cherished tradition declares that, in 'the untrodden solitude of Ararat's tremendous peak,' the ark

may still be found embedded amid the eternal snows. It is quite clear that these primitive Orientals, wonderful as they were in many respects, had not foreseen what troubles their haphazard statements were laying up in store for the exercise of the patience and industry of the higher critics.

Somewhere in these regions which go by the name of Ararat, the ark, we may be permitted to suppose, did come to rest. Hence Armenia's claim to be, if not the first, at least the second cradle of the human race. The country east of the Euphrates, when most fully organized for political purposes, under a native dynasty, consisted of fifteen divisions. The original Armenia has now come to be portioned out as provinces of Turkey, Russia and Persia.

Turkish Armenia at the present day, including Kurdistan, forms a separate province of the Ottoman Empire. It is subdivided into three vilayets, or governments—Erzeroum, Mamouret-ul-Aziz, and Diarbekir—with the adjoining regions of Bitlis and Van. Erzeroum, the political capital of Turkish Armenia, is favourably situated for commercial and military purposes, being on the highway between the East and the West.* Van,

* Consul Hampson, writing from Erzeroum, December 19, 1891, says: 'As far back as the year 1850, Consul Brandt drew the attention of the Embassy to the existence of valuable coal mines in this neighbourhood. . . In spite of the fact, however, that fuel is one of the great difficulties at Erzeroum, both for household and manufacturing purposes, that wood is brought every year from greater distances, and,

one of the old capitals, is, from its associations with native and Assyrian story, foremost in romantic and antiquarian interest. Batoum, along with Kars, was ceded to Russia by the Berlin Treaty, 1878.

From the fluctuations of the limits of Armenia, as we have now indicated, it is difficult, or rather impossible, to mention boundaries of a fixed kind. The region just described may be regarded as the mother-country. It contains a mixed population of Turks, Kurds, etc., and only about 600,000 Armenians, or about one-fourth of the whole number within the Turkish dominions.

The Armenians at present are said to number about four millions. Of these there are about two and a half millions in Turkey, one and a fourth millions in Russia, 150,000 in Persia and the East, 100,000 in Europe, and 5,000 in the United States of America.

The Armenians claim to be the oldest nation on the face of the earth. They date the origin of their dynasties from the time when the ark rested

consequently, continually increases in dearness, and that, from this cause, the establishment of any machine-worked industry is practically impossible here, the Government has steadily refused all permission to exploit the coal which is known to exist. . . . Nor is coal the only valuable natural product thus neglected, although it is the one the necessity for which is most pressing. I am assured that within a radius of three miles from one of the coal fields exist rich silver and copper mines, permission to work which has also been refused. Gold and boracite have also been found in the same district, and in another district a spring of petroleum of excellent quality is known to exist.'—'Blue Book,' Turkey, No. 3 (1896).

on the mountains of Ararat. They even go still further back, and claim that the Armenian was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. They designate themselves Haik, after the great-grandson of Japhet, the reputed founder of their nation. The Armenians are no doubt, like other Aryan races, of the line of Japhet. They are distinguished by their native intelligence and spirit of enterprise. In these and other respects they resemble the Semitic character, and have often been compared with the Jews. There is a somewhat cynical proverb, that it takes two Jews to cheat a Greek, and two Greeks to cheat an Armenian.

The Armenian is of striking personal appearance, with keen, dark, flashing eyes and restless temperament; he is above the middle height; the complexion is darkish brown or yellow; the forehead is broad and massive.

We turn to the page of sacred history for the earliest reliable references to Armenia. There we learn that the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. There are other and later references, as that to the sons of Sennacherib, who, after slaying their father in self-defence, escaped into Armenia. Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah refer to it—the one to its traffic in mules and horses with Tyre, the other to its alliance with Cyrus in the siege of Babylon.

The oldest native histories are to a large extent a mass of fable. Little more can be learned from them than that in ancient times the

Armenians were governed by independent or tributary kings, and that the Assyrians, the Medes, and Persians were in turn their conquerors and oppressors.

This fabulous history has, however, some passages of lively interest. Let us instance a few of them : Haig, their natural progenitor, was, it seems, a prodigy of valour and religious zeal. He slew the tyrant Belus, who was the first to introduce idolatry among mankind. He lived to a great age ; the chronicler does not affect precision on the point, but thinks it was probably 500 years. Armenac, the son of Haig, had twelve brothers, named after the months of the year ; he had also twenty-four sisters, named after the hours of the day. Aram, from whom the Armenians are supposed by the romancer to get their name, was the first to raise his people to a position of renown among the nations.

One of the first historical personages to appear on the stage of ancient Armenia is no other than the famous Assyrian queen Semiramis. Those who may have chanced to harbour a vague fancy that Semiramis, from the masculine type of character, is an old-world hero, will have their minds disabused of that fallacy when we mention that she appears as a royal lover smit with the charms of the Armenian king Arah. She somewhat overdoes her part, and makes him a proposal of marriage. She offers him, along with herself, the Assyrian crown. Arah does not see his way to accept of

his good fortune. The royal passion suddenly changes from love to revenge. She invades his kingdom at the head of her army, and to her great grief Arah is slain in battle.

To make what amends she now can, she transfers her affection to Arah's son and heir. She places him upon his father's throne. Thereafter the love-lorn warrior-queen, conceiving a liking for the climate and scenery of Armenia, turns it into a summer resort. The spot chosen for her residence is the romantic region in the neighbourhood of Lake Van. There she builds not only a royal palace or castle, but also the city of Van. This region she continues to frequent until she falls in battle fighting against her own son, and by the side of her ally, the son of the beloved Arah. To this day the name of Semiramis survives in local designations in this spot. The romance so far furnishes the key to the explorer of the inscriptions about Lake Van. It enables him to understand why those inscriptions are entirely different from the Persian or Babylonian character, and are mostly in the Assyrian style of cuneiform writing. The historians Diodorus Siculus and Strabo both confirm the accounts of monumental erections in Armenia by Semiramis.

About the time when the Israelites departed from Egypt, Armenia, we are told, was temporarily subdued by Sesostris, the Egyptian king. The reigning prince was then Pharnak, who soon regained his independence. In the time of his

successor, Soor, took place the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. Many of the aboriginal Canaanites took refuge in Armenia. One of these old Armenian kings, named Zarmayr, was engaged in the Trojan war on the side of Priam, and was slain in single combat by Achilles. We have, however, no Homer to describe the encounter, or to rehearse the haughty colloquy which must have preceded it.

In the reign of Paroyr, who was a contemporary of Sennacherib of sacred history, Armenia threw off the Assyrian yoke, and joined Arbaces the Mede in his rebellion against Sardanapalus. On the murder of Sennacherib by his two sons, Adramelech and Sharezer, Paroyr received the parricides into his dominions. The allegiance of Armenia was now transferred to Media, the native dynasty still holding its place.

After another long list of mythical kings, we come to Hay Kak II. He was an ally of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. When the Jews were carried by this monarch into captivity, Hay Kak received into his kingdom a Jewish chief, Shambat, with his family. This Shambat and his posterity settled in the country, and his name is revered as the ancestor of the great dynasty of the Bagratidæ, which was destined in due time to occupy the throne of their adopted country.

During the period of Median supremacy there seems to have been a revival of the native spirit of independence. Tigranes I. distinguishes him-

self by a victory over the Median king Ahasuerus, whom he slays in battle with his own hand. The victory is also due largely to the self-sacrifice of Tigrana, a sister of the King of Armenia. The wedded queen of Ahasuerus, she divulges his evil designs against the throne of her brother, and flees for protection to her native country. The information had proved a timely warning, and Tigrana ranks henceforth among the saviours of Armenia. Not less interesting, and more authentic, is the record of the alliance of Tigranes with Cyrus, the Persian king, in the overthrow of Babylon, and the liberation of the Jews from captivity, B.C. 538. To this event Jeremiah is supposed to refer in the prophecy, 'Call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Askenaz . . . to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.'

According to the chronology of both Jews and Armenians, Tigranes was the Armenian king at the capture of Babylon. Under all these changes in her relations to her neighbours, Armenia continued to retain her native dynasties with more or less show of independence.

There are frequent allusions to Armenia in both the Institution and Expedition of Cyrus. In the year B.C. 401, the Armenian satrap Teribazus was startled by the approach of a vast body of armed men from the south, bent, as he could not doubt, on the invasion of his country. He prepared at once to contest their passage of the small river

Centrites, by which the Armenian frontier was bounded. After some encounters, it was found that the strangers harboured no designs on Armenia. The relations now changed, and the chief troubles of the retreating Ten Thousand arose, not from a hostile people, but from the rigours of an Armenian winter. The narrative of Xenophon, with its side-lights on the habits of life, the earth-dwellings and warlike character of the Armenians, is familiar to every reader of the *Anabasis*.

But a conqueror from the West did at last appear on the plains of Asia, through whom both the Persian and Armenian prestige was destined to receive a blow from which it was never fully to recover. Vahey, the last of the Armenian kings, and the ally of Darius, fell in battle, fighting bravely against the enemy. That enemy was no other than the victorious Alexander, the son of the Macedonian Philip. Armenia now became a Greek province. On the death of Alexander the Great (B.C. 323), it fell to the lot of one of his successors, Seleucus, and was thereupon ruled by the Syrian Seleucidæ, until B.C. 246. They were succeeded by the Arsacidæ, who founded the empire of the Parthians.

About B.C. 150, the Arsacidan or Parthian king, Arsaces the Great (Mithridates I.), placed his brother Valarsaces on the throne of Armenia. This monarch, after having made some important conquests, turned his attention to the administration of his dominions, and endeavoured to improve

the condition of his people. In this beneficent labour he was ably assisted by Bagarat, his Jewish minister, whose name was yet to become so prominent among the rulers of Armenia. The Arsacidan or Parthian dynasty continued until A.D. 226. This, again, was succeeded by that of the Sassanidæ, which ruled for over 400 years. The power of the Arsacidæ over Armenia rose and fell with the fortunes of Persia in her struggle with her formidable rivals. In these fluctuations the supremacy of Rome asserted itself, and Armenia became a Roman province. The raid of Antony into Armenia, to humour the caprice of his mistress Cleopatra, and the exhibition of an Armenian king, in gilded chains, in the streets of Alexandria, is a striking rather than influential episode in the history of the country.

In the reign of Constantine the Great, Armenia had acquired such a degree of independence, or, in more modern phrase, Home Rule, as to have its own tributary king.

We have thus briefly sketched the outline of the earlier period of Armenian history.

The chief if not the only guides over this period are the native writers—Moses of Chorene, a disciple of Miesrop, belonging to the fifth century; and Father Michael Chamich, who published his history of Armenia in 1786. The latter work was translated into English by Johannes Avdall, Calcutta, 1827. Mr. Avdall belongs to a small yet distinguished group of native Armenian

scholars, who have in recent times done good service on behalf of the enlightenment of their own country and of the Eastern world.

The earlier of these two histories, that of the gentile Moses, extends from Haig, the great-grandson of Japhet, on to A.D. 440. His narrative must, from the lack of the necessary information, as there are no ancient records, be largely of a legendary character. A certain Syrian romancer, Mar Ibas by name, seems to have had sufficient resources to impose upon this lover of antiquarian lore, and to mislead him into the acceptance of much that was merest fable as veritable history. And yet one ought not to forget that the Armenian Moses did his best with an impossible task, and if he does not much instruct, can hardly fail, now and again, to amuse his reader.

As Father Chamich, whose history extends from B.C. 2247 to the year of Christ 1780, rests the earlier portion of his narrative on the authority of his predecessor, we cannot wonder that his record is not more successful. In the more clearly-defined historic period, at which it may be supposed we have now arrived, there are, of course, other guiding lights.

We have, however, reached the limits of what we had intended to say on the earliest times of Armenia.

An incursion has been made into an ancient realm which is not only the mother-country of the Armenians, but of the human race.

We cannot wonder that a halo of romance, in the absence of the clear light of history, should crown the brows of its hoary mountains, and spread itself over its plains and lakes, its cities and palaces.

As the enveloping mists from time to time roll away, we can see that the drama of Armenian life is no fiction, but a stern reality. To a closer scrutiny there are not wanting proofs of a progressive national movement. The Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Median, the Persian, the Greek and Roman conquerors march stormfully across the stage.

We see one ruthless hand after another made, in some degree, to relax its grasp of the victim, until at last a master appears, who can not only control, but also educate his vassal. With the conquest of the Greek Alexander, and the subsequent Roman domination, we enter upon a new era in the history of Armenia.

CHAPTER II.

The introduction of Christianity into Armenia as the national religion by St. Gregory the Illuminator and his successors in the fourth century—Constitution of the old Armenian Church.

THE culture and civilization of the West had begun to penetrate into Armenia with the victorious legions of the Greeks and Romans. Another of the many deluges which have swept over this unhappy land was showing tokens of subsidence, and the ark was once more nearing a place of rest.

The inauguration of this new era was the acceptance of the Christian religion as the national faith. This was the grand decisive event which was destined to draw forth the noblest qualities of the Armenian people, and to preserve to this day their national unity. Some conception of the character of this movement is thus necessary to enable us to understand their subsequent history. For the accounts we have of this change of the national religion, we are mainly indebted to the father of Armenian history—Moses of Chorene. His narrative is none the

less valuable that we know it to be confirmed, in some portions, by collateral evidence.

The calendar of the Armenian Church records, giving specific dates, the casting of its founder, St. Gregory, into the pit, the taking of him out of it, and the finding of his body in Mount Sebuhi. Chrysostom is one of his many panegyrists. A history of events from the time of Abgar, with a Life of St. Gregory, had been written by Agathangelos, but it is a tissue of fable. There is also a modern life in Armenian, by the Uniat Vartabed Matthew, translated into English by Rev. S. C. Malan, 1868. Even with these and such-like authorities we can hardly wonder that it is not always easy to say what is fact and what is fiction.

It is not possible to give specific information on the original forms of the religion of the race. They claim, indeed, for their ancestor the distinction of having slain Belus, the first propagator of idolatry. His descendants, however, would seem to have, in course of time, devised a religious cult of their own, as well as to have yielded so far to the idolatrous nature-worship of their neighbours. Immediately before the introduction of Christianity 'the prevailing religion was a mixture of Persian fire-worship and Greek idolatry.' To this, no doubt, we may add the worship of their own native divinities.

The Armenians were the first nation to accept the Christian religion. The Roman Empire was a full generation behind them in taking this

step. Some thirty-seven years elapsed from the baptism of Tiridates, his household, courtiers and others, to the publication of the edict for the toleration of the new faith by the Roman Emperor.

The founder of the national Armenian Church had seen his wondrous visions of the Only Begotten, and built the Cathedral of Etchmiadzin, under the shadow of Mount Ararat, before Constantine, as the result of his vision of the luminous cross and its motto, had given instructions that it should replace the eagle on the standards of his armies. The ancient chroniclers claim for the Armenian Church an Apostolic origin and constitution. Abgar, the Arsacidan king, who reigned from B.C. 5 to A.D. 32, wrote, we are told, a letter to Jesus. The king requested the Saviour to cure him of some disease, and to come and live at his court. A reply was sent through the Apostle Thomas, assuring him of the cure of his distemper, and promising him in due time spiritual life for himself and his people.

In fulfilment of this promise, it is related Thaddeus, Bartholomew, and Jude preached the Gospel and suffered martyrdom in Armenia.

Legend apart, it is not unlikely that the Gospel was preached in Armenia by some of the converts of the Apostolic Churches of Asia Minor, either in the first or second century. But there is sufficient evidence that, under the persecutions which followed, the people again fell back into idolatry.

The revival of the faith, culminating in a permanent national acceptance, dates from the time of St. Gregory, the Illuminator of all Armenia. His Armenian epithet is Lusavoritch, Greek Photistes. St. Gregory was the youngest son of an Arsacidan prince, Anak, who mortally stabbed the reigning Armenian king, Chosroes, A.D. 232. The dying king ordered the instant slaughter of his murderer and all his family. At this critical juncture took place the birth of Gregory, the youngest son of the doomed household. The child was preserved by the devotion of his nurse, a Christian woman, who got him conveyed to the protection of a Christian noble of Cæsarea, called Euthalius. Here he was educated in the faith of the Gospel. Afterwards he carried on his studies in Athens and Rome. Returning to Cæsarea, he married a lady like-minded with himself. We are told that her name was Mary, and that she was the mother of two sons, destined to do noble service to the cause of Christ in Armenia. The narrative goes on to say that three years after the birth of her youngest son she and her husband separated by mutual consent, to serve God by a closer union. She spent the rest of her life in a nunnery. Whatever may be said of this story, the Armenian Church does not enjoin celibacy upon its priesthood. St. Gregory's experience may thus have taught him a useful lesson, from which others were to profit in the years to come. Free from family ties, imbued with the culture of Greece and

Rome, and, above all, burning with Apostolic zeal for the spread of the Gospel among his countrymen, Gregory returned to Armenia. Preserving his incognito for a time, he gained admission into the royal household, and established himself in the favour of King Tiridates, the son of the murdered Chosroes. Tiridates was a violent persecutor of the Christians. It had been his great object to utterly exterminate the few still to be found in his kingdom.

Not aware of the creed of Gregory, Tiridates had ordered him to crown his favourite goddess Anahit, with garlands. Gregory avowed his faith in Christ, and boldly refused to participate in idolatry. Tiridates subjected him, it is said, to twelve different species of torture, and finally cast him into a noisome pit. He remained in prison for thirteen, some say fifteen years.

At length St. Gregory, having cured the king of his sister of a terrible disease, was set at liberty. He at once began to preach the Gospel. He now numbered among his converts the persecutor Tiridates himself, his queen, and his sister. Of the last it is naïvely said by the historian that she was a remarkable woman, who 'did not, like other females, let loose her tongue, even when she was not a Christian.'

Agathangelos says, mistaking a parable for a merely grotesque miracle, that the king was transformed into a boar, and came to the feet of St. Gregory, who restored him to his original

form. The change was no doubt typical of that which passed on many others as well as the king. Brutal ferocity began to give place to the supremacy of a new spirit. It has ever been the glory of the Gospel of Christ that its strains have effectually subdued and softened wilder and more savage natures than were wont to be swayed by the lyre of Orpheus.

How far the conversion of the nation was a real transformation of character we cannot say.

The courtiers, so far as outward conduct went, largely followed the example of the king. The movement became national. The notions of propagating religion in those early times were not what, under a better understanding of its spirit, they have since become. The primitive African chief, who ruled his tribesmen by club-law alone, could not understand why the missionary should trouble himself reasoning with and exhorting them to receive the Gospel. All that was necessary, as it seemed to him, was to send round among them a peremptory order, to be enforced, if need be, by the headsman's application of the cowhide.

The same rough-and-ready method for the defence and propagation of the Gospel has ever had its attractions for not a few, since Peter first drew his sword against his Master's foes in the Garden of Gethsemane. But it has not been resorted to by our wisest reformers. St. Gregory was a true Christian missionary. Brave in suffering, diplomatic in action, considerate and generous in deal-

ing with the prejudices and foibles of men, he saw that the revolution at which he aimed could only be effected by spiritual forces. These he could exercise and utilize with a genius and energy all his own.

At the desire of Tiridates, Gregory went to Cæsarea, and was there, A.D. 302, consecrated by Leontius, the Archbishop, Patriarch of all Armenia. He then set himself to organize the new Church, and to establish a system of schools.

He gathered together a number of rough country boys, and instructed them particularly in the knowledge of the Scriptures. His presence and teaching wrought a marvellous change upon their characters. They saw him setting aside every consideration of ease and safety in the pursuit of his mission. No service was too lowly or trying for him to render to others; no opposition could quench or even damp his enthusiasm. The priests of the decaying idolatry received his instructions and proffered their services the more gladly that he was careful of their worldly interests and continued to them their former emoluments.

Having completed the magnificent temple of The Only Begotten at Etchmiadzin, and carried through what personal service he could render to the cause to which he had devoted his life, St Gregory, now an aged man, retired to Moun Sebu, to end his days in solitary communion with God. His son had already been appointed as his successor at Etchmiadzin.

He died alone, unattended. The body was

covered with a heap of stones by some shepherds about the mountain. Some years afterwards it was removed, and laid to rest in the village of Thorkan, in Mount Sebu.

Since then, tradition assures us, the sacred body of St. Gregory has been distributed over a large area of Christendom. The head and prison-chains were conveyed to Naples; the left hand was conveyed to Etchmiadzin, and the right to Sis.

Under such circumstances did the Church of St. Gregory—the most ancient of national Christian Churches—find a place in Armenia. The central temple stands where it has stood since the days of its founder, at Etchmiadzin, at the base of Ararat, in the fertile valley of Erivan in Upper Armenia. It has belonged since 1828 to the Russian division of Armenia. It is the residence of the chief patriarch of the Armenian Church. His title, no doubt somewhat more complex since the simple times of St. Gregory, runs thus: ‘The servant of Jesus Christ, and by the grace of God Catholicos of all the Armenians, and Patriarch of the Holy Convent of Etchmiadzin.’

The list of the successors of the first patriarch is of great length, extending from his son Aristaces on to the present day, and to his Holiness Mugerditch Khrimian, the present Catholicos of Etchmiadzin. He is represented as a man of large and liberal views, anxious for a progressive movement. As one glances over the Armenian Church

calendar, he is struck not only by the array of sacred feasts, but also by their frequent and severe fasts. It is further noteworthy that they not only keep Sabbath in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, ~~but~~ Saturday also, in memory of the finished work of creation.

The form of government is episcopal. The chief patriarch is chosen by the representatives of the dioceses, met in regular synod at Etchmiadzin. The nomination is then submitted to the Emperor of Russia, who, when he gives his approval, notifies the appointment to the Governments of Turkey and Persia. The dioceses are five, the principal being those of Etchmiadzin and Constantinople. In the case of the others the title of patriarch is merely honorary.*

There are two religious orders of men among the Armenians: one follows the rule of St. Anthony, the other that of St. Basil. The robing of the priests when about to celebrate the Eucharist is a highly symbolical ceremony.

The Armenian Liturgy is regarded as one of the most ancient and beautiful of its kind. It was compiled originally from liturgies used by St. Gregory, St. Basil, and St. Athanasius. It was revised, in the fifth century, by the translators of the Scriptures into the Armenian tongue. The liturgy regulates the Communion Service. That service is conducted with an attention to

* Dr. Wilson's 'Lands of the Bible' (Armenian Church vol. ii., pp. 481, 482.

elaborate ceremonial which has well-nigh turned the heads of some of our English ritualists who have witnessed its observance. Apart from its flavour of idolatry, it has its attractions for the ordinary Protestant worshipper.

The National Church of Armenia was soon tested by a bloody persecution. In the reign of Julian the Apostate it so pressed upon the people that many of them relapsed into heathenism. The nobles drove from the throne Chosnes, the son of Tiridates. Then followed an ordeal of suffering in which nearly all the prelates and priests were martyred, including Husak, son of Vertannes, the Patriarch of Armenia.

In A.D. 345 Chosnes was restored to the throne, and Christianity made a further advance as the national religion. From A.D. 364, when Arsaces, King of Armenia, created Nierces, the grandson of Husak, Primate of Armenia, Etchmiadzin became the seat of an independent hierarchy.

The translation of the Scriptures, which belongs to a still later period, may be said to have completed the national revolution. That revolution was not, indeed, the work of any one man, or even generation of men, but rather of a succession of national reformers.

The Armenian Reformation, which we have been chiefly considering, was an event for which there had been a long Providential preparation. It is one of those formative periods of history which powerfully impress the student with the

conviction of a Divine idea, working with creative energy, amid the seemingly aimless commotions of individuals and communities. Nothing can well be a more striking illustration of the guiding principle which constitutes the philosophy of history.

Yet the principle in question is ordinarily embodied in the person and career of either a single individual or cluster of individuals, and so the history of the great movements of the world is, at bottom, the history of its great men. In this sense the story of St. Gregory is largely, for this period, the story of Armenia. In it also we find the key to much otherwise utterly unintelligible in its subsequent history.

We have therefore traced the general course of this life-story. The scenes have flitted across the canvas somewhat swiftly and indistinctly. Yet the central figure has been ever before us.

First it is that of a helpless, doomed Armenian child, saved from the family massacre by a kind-hearted Christian nurse. In the next stage, we have an eager student of Western culture and the Scriptures in Cæsarea, the city of Cornelius and of the imprisonment of the Apostle of the Gentiles. In the third stage he steps forth a daring witness for Christ at the heathen court of one of the most relentless of the Armenian persecutors of the faith. In the last stage he appears as the Illuminator, carrying the light of the Gospel into all the dark corners of his native land. Never since

that time has this light wholly faded. The life-story of this, the grandest of all the Armenian saints, is an abiding record of labour, suffering, and success. Every step of the Apostolic career is full of interest, until the figure vanishes from our view into its quiet devotional retreat in the solitudes of Mount Sebu.

Thus far the story of the founder of the national Church of Armenia.

We have also glanced at that old Armenian Church itself, its origin and constitution. We have tried to see it at the far-off end of a long retrospective vista, and before it had become, to some degree, changed for good or evil by those testing experiences through which it has since been destined to pass.

CHAPTER III.

Arsacidan and Sassanian dynasties—Religious and literary revival—Translation of the Scriptures by St. Miesrop and St. Isaac—Sketches of Armenian history from the introduction of Christianity by St. Gregory to the rise of the dynasty of the Bagratidæ, A.D. 860.

WE can only glance rapidly at some of the more important events and tendencies in the history of Armenia during this period. In the absence of reliable information, largely accounted for by the unhappy circumstances of the country and people, that history, even at its best, is to some extent mythological. The principal native chronicler, Father Chamich, when he is not compiling a somewhat dry catalogue of Armenian kings, princes, and military chiefs, not to mention patriarchs and priests, is wont to regale his persevering reader with wonderful stories of supernatural agencies. If there is too frequently a monotonous repetition of calamity upon calamity, like a succession of wave-lines on mid-ocean, there is, at the same time, the most piquant variety in

the standing miracles which embellish the national record.

The storms which swept over ancient Armenia, with tornado-like violence, buried among their débris large portions of the national record. While we have here and there a chapter of horrors which seems, somehow, like a facsimile of a former chapter in the long-drawn-out tragedy, there are not a few manifestly missing. Others are so blotted and blurred with blood and tears as to be far less decipherable than those strange runic characters on the rocks about Lake Van which have so severely taxed the ingenuity and patience of the disciples of Rawlinson and Layard.

But we return to our sketch. We have seen how the Armenian Church, the oldest national Church in Christendom, was founded by the Apostolic St. Gregory. We have traced some of his more immediate reforms, in which he was assisted so nobly by his royal convert Tiridates.

Tiridates was certainly one of the bravest and best of all the race of the Arsacidan kings which ruled over Armenia. When nearing the close of a long and brilliant career, seeing the Armenian chiefs relapsing into their former idolatrous habits and abandoning the sanctity of the Christian faith, Tiridates convened them together and remonstrated with them on their apostasy. As this produced no good results, he resigned the sceptre, and retired to spend the rest of his days on Mount Sebu, where St. Gregory had passed in devout

seclusion the last years of his life. His turbulent courtiers urged him in vain to resume the reins of government, and exasperated by his persistent refusal, they put an end to his life by poison.

So fell the first Christian King of Armenia, a martyr to the faith of which at one time he had been the most relentless persecutor. He died in the eighty-fifth year of his age, and after a reign of fifty-six years. His body was interred in the fortress of Ani, a name which also recalls what was for long afterwards one of the royal cities of Armenia.

We may, perhaps, as well here indicate the position and duration of the two main dynasties which belong to this period, *i.e.*, those of the Arsacidæ and Sassanidæ. Some idea of their general position and character is desirable for a better understanding of their influence in Armenia. The Arsacidan or Parthian dynasty succeeded that of the Seleucidæ in the East, B.C. 246. It became extinct in Persia A.D. 226. The Arsacidæ are said by Father Chamich to have been of the race of Abraham through Keturah. Gibbon describes them as an obscure horde of Scythian origin from all the provinces of Upper Asia. They were beyond doubt a bold, warlike dynasty, not much concerned about any form of religion, and so, while subduing the Persians, did not much interest themselves in their fire-worship. Their successors, the Sassanidæ, claimed to be of the ancient blood royal of Persia, and with

them it was a sacred mission to revive and extend the faith of Zoroaster. This will explain how it comes to pass that the fiercest and most bloody religious persecution in Armenia was carried on by the Sassanidæ, whose object was to convert the Armenian nation to this alien creed.

Now, the Arsacidan dynasty, which occupied the Persian throne until A.D. 226, was long survived by its offshoot which ruled in Armenia. The latter was the tributary dynasty of the former, which regarded Armenia as a province of its empire. This relation it still held to Persia after the accession of the Sassanian dynasty to the Persian throne. The Sassanian Kings of Persia accordingly sanctioned the appointment of Arsacidan sovereigns in Armenia, and this went on until the deposition of the last Arsacidan Armenian monarch, Arlashir, by the Persian king Baharam V. (Chamich, Viram) in A.D. 428. The Sassanidæ continued to reign in Persia until they were overthrown by the Saracens on the plains of Cadesia in A.D. 636.*

During the reign of these Persian dynasties they assumed an over-lordship of Armenia and its tributary kings. When at length the semblance even of monarchy disappeared with the last Arsacidan King of Armenia, the op-

* 'Who on Cadesia's bloody plains
Saw fierce invaders pluck the gem
From Iran's broken diadem,
And bind her ancient faith in chains.'

Moore's 'Fire-worshippers.'

pression of the Sassanidæ became more intolerable, and a new era of endurance opened up for the subject country.

Before we proceed to this stage, we must again retrace our steps and note some earlier occurrences. On the death of Tiridates and the settlement of his son, Khosrove II., by Greek force on the throne of Armenia, a fierce war broke out between the new sovereign and Sapor (Chamich, Shapuh), which resulted in bloody engagements, and was continued, on one pretext or another, over the reigns of two other Armenian kings, Tiran and Pap. The character of the Armenian kings down to the close of the fourth century is such as modifies our regret that we do not know more about them. They were manifestly a rather low type—sensual, perfidious and cruel.

But if the palaces of Armenia were not during this period abodes of either virtue or piety, such the Chronicler assures us was not the case with the dwellings of the patriarchs and higher priesthood. This testimony is all the more pleasing since after-ages have so often had too good reason to comment on the degeneracy of the patriarchate, through the degradations to which, especially under Moslem tyranny, it has been systematically subjected.

In Armenia, as elsewhere, the Christian religion has been the source of all the great movements which elevate and consolidate a nation. The revolution originating with the primary labours of

St. Gregory was taken up by his son, St. Vertannes, amid increasing difficulties. It found a champion worthy to take the place of Gregory himself in Nierses, one of the grandest prophetic characters in Church history. While an apostate race of sovereigns were living in open debauchery, and cultivating alliances with the infidel Julian, St. Nierses and some other like-minded men were carrying through the stupendous enterprise of what was in reality a second reformation in Armenia. St. Nierses was appointed Patriarch of Armenia in A.D. 366. The Church became at once a centre of new life. The mode of worship, its outward forms, and, above all, its spirit, were improved. Convents were built to the number of 2,000, when the ideal of monastic life had not yet been degraded by the corruptions of after-times. Public schools, asylums for widows and orphans, as well as other beneficent institutions, began to rise over the land. A true patriot, Nierses again and again risked his life to deliver his country from trouble incurred by its foolish rulers in their relations with the Greeks or Persians. He fell at last a martyr to the cause which he had served with such unwearied devotion.

Having ventured to admonish the reprobate King Pap for the betrayal of his faith, that miscreant secretly put him to death by poison. We can hardly wonder that to the glowing imagination of his co-patriots and co-religionists a vision of unearthly glory seems ever to surround the

person of such a man, and that at last it was averred that he had been seen ascending to heaven, accompanied by a host of angels.

Yet all this Christian activity was little else than the prelude to greater and more enduring labours. This was the religious and literary revival connected with Miesrop, the secretary, and St. Isaac, the son, of Nierses. St. Isaac became Patriarch of Armenia in A.D. 390. In A.D. 393 he began, in conjunction with Miesrop, a movement for the improvement of the vernacular language. Hitherto the Armenian had possessed no native characters. In the east they employed the Persian, and in the west of Armenia the Syriac, character. The chronicle relates that St. Isaac and Miesrop having both failed to do what they had purposed, *i.e.*, to invent a native alphabet, Miesrop went to Somosata. In the act of prayer, so runs the legend, he received the necessary help, and, rising from his knees, he at once invented all the Armenian characters in exquisite perfection. This historical event, however mixed with fabulous details, took place in A.D. 406. When the invention was made public there were great rejoicings in Armenia. St. Miesrop was borne in triumph into the capital, and public thanks were returned to the Bestower of all good. The new alphabet was now taught in the schools.

Thus, as is ever the case, the Christian religion brought with it a new intellectual era. Before this time the Armenians had got what little culture

they had from the Assyrians and Medo-Persians. But except a few old songs and ballads, the pre-Christian literature of Armenia has ceased to exist.

The surviving literary treasures are thus subsequent to the fourth century, and are largely historical. Poetry and fiction have not been much cultivated by the Armenians. They are a practical rather than a sentimental race, receiving from those who know them best in the business of life the designation of the Dutchmen of the East, and this practical cast of thought and utterance is characteristic of their literary efforts. Their native tongue, or the old Armenian, belongs to the Indo-Germanic group of languages. It has no distinction of genders, and abounds in irregularities of declension and conjugation; has, it seems, a harsh sound, and is the despair of the foreigner as to mastery of pronunciation. With the impulse derived from Christian thought, the Armenians now began to study the works of the Greek philosophers and historians, the masterpieces, indeed, of both Greek and Roman culture, and to admire and copy these models.*

* Speaking of St. Miesrop, Mr. Tozer says: 'His name, though little known in Europe, is still in great repute in his native country, and with good reason; for if any holy men deserve to be held in pious remembrance, those have an especial claim who, like Ulfilas, the Apostle of the Goths, and Cyril and Methodius, the Apostles of the Slavonians, and Miesrop, have invented alphabets for those among whom they preached the Gospel. In their time and for the nations they evangelized, they did hardly a less important work than the inventors of printing subsequently did for the world at large. From a political point of view, also, St. Miesrop

A few of their more promising disciples were now despatched by St. Miesrop and St. Isaac to Edessa and Constantinople to translate into Armenian some of the learned works of other nations. There they found and brought back with them to their masters a correct version of the Septuagint. Up to this time the Syrian version of the Bible had been used in Armenia, and an interpreter was needed to translate into the vernacular the portions of Scripture read at public worship.

This translation of the Scriptures into the Armenian tongue contains more books than those of the Western Churches. These additional books in the Old Testament are: (1) The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; (2) The History of Joseph and his wife Asenath; (3) The Book of Jesus, the son of Sirach. In the New Testament the additions are: (1) The Epistle of the Corinthians to St. Paul; (2) St. Paul's Third Epistle to the Corinthians. These additional books are considered apocryphal.

The Bible so translated into the vernacular is the oldest Armenian book extant, the next being that of Moses of Chorene, which was composed about half a century later. It is the crown of all the literary labours of the period to which it

was a great benefactor to his countrymen, for, whereas, up to that time, from the absence of a native version of the Scriptures and liturgy, they had been ecclesiastically, and to some extent politically, subject either to the Greeks or the Syrians, they were thenceforward able to assert their independence.' (Tozer's 'Turkish Armenia,' pp. 252, 253.)

belongs. All agree that it is the highest model of literary style. Thus, the Armenian version of the Scriptures holds the same relative place to other works as the version of Luther in Germany, or the Authorized Version in our own country.

As the literary movements advanced, translations were made of such works as the *Chronicles* of Eusebius, the *Discourses* of Philo, the *Homilies* of St. Chrysostom, Servianus, Basil the Greek, and Ephraim the Syrian. Among the more prominent literati who composed or translated were David, the translator and commentator of Aristotle; Esnik, the author of certain works against the fire-worshippers; Goriun, the Xenophon of Armenian literature, the biographer of Miesrop. Moses of Chorene and Elisæus, a disciple of Miesrop, are the chief native historians of this period.

The Armenians were now the foremost Christian nation in a double sense. They were experiencing the beneficial effects of a revival of their national faith. But a testing ordeal was at hand. We have said that the Arsacidan dynasty was not to be regarded as an enthusiastic defender of the creed of Zoroaster. It was not a life purpose with them to impose it on their Armenian or other subjects. This temper changed at once with the accession of the Sassanidæ. Their first sovereign, Ardisher (Roman, Artaxerxes), succeeded in procuring the assassination of Khosrove, the Arsacidan King of Armenia, by Anak, the father of St. Gregory. His son Tiridates would never have come to the

throne of Armenia had not the opposition of the Sassanian king been overborne by the Greek legions. All through their connection with this Persian dynasty the Armenians were ever turning for succour to their co-religionists at Constantinople. Bound together by a common creed, and by the recent acceptance by both of the decrees of the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, they often took the field side by side in opposition to the grand scheme of the Sassanian kings. That scheme, as we have already said, was to convert Armenia to the religion of the Magi. The persecution which thus ensued was not that of a single despot, but of a whole Magian dynasty, renewed at intervals over four centuries, and embittered from the peculiar relation of the oppressor and the oppressed, beyond all precedent, during the latter half of this period. Among the Persian kings most prominent in these bloody persecutions were Sapor; Yezdejirt I. and II., in whose reigns the atrocities were again revived; and Baharam V. (Chamich, Viram II.), who deposed the last Arsacidan King of Armenia.

The resistance of the Armenian nation to these long-continued attacks on their faith gives to this whole otherwise doleful era in their history the distinction of noble martyrdom, demanding the most heroic courage and devotion. Armenia thus stands forth as an Eastern realm which could not be coerced into an alien faith either by the scimitar of the Persian or the sword of Mahomet.

As we cannot go into details with this recital, we select a single persecution for a passing reference, as a specimen of many others, and of the spirit in which they were met by the Armenians.

Yezdejirt II., A.D. 450, had finally resolved that if oppressive taxation, torture, or any other of the approved weapons of Oriental imperialism, could accomplish it, Armenia must be made to embrace the Persian religion. The experiment, hitherto, had failed.* At length the despot wrote a letter, peremptorily demanding submission, and sent along with it an exposition of the tenets of the Magian creed. The demand was considered in an assembly of the chiefs and people convened by the pontiff St. Joseph in the city of Artashat. The assembly decided on a resolute rejection of the infamous injunction. The enraged king summoned the recalcitrant chiefs to his court, and threatened to send them in chains as exiles into a distant land, if they did not worship the sun on the following morning. Hoping to escape by a compromise, they did so—thinking this meantime the best course—to enable them ultimately to abide by the cause of their religion. On their return to their own country, they did not consider themselves bound by a concession wrung from them by tyrannical force. Under their leader Vartan they took the field against the invading Persian host, and fought with such valour that they completely routed the enemy. They de-

* See Neander's 'Church History,' vol. iii., pp. 149-152; also p. 161.

molished the fire temples, and rebuilt the profaned and ruined churches. The brave Vartan performed prodigies of valour; 'wherever he presented himself, the enemy were mowed down by his sword, as blades of grass by the sickle,' but ere the struggle was over he fell with nine other chiefs.

Thus the remorseless conflict went on, the Armenians ever presenting, as a nation, a resolute front to the foe. Towards the close of the sixth century, Vahan, a Christian prefect, was appointed, and the Christian religion regained its legitimate place in the nation.* At this temporary resting-place, we shall now note the position of the Armenian Church, as regards her relation to the Greek and Roman communions, and also to the heresies of this period.

The harassed condition of the country, both in Eastern and Western Armenia, continued under the entire sway of the Sassanidæ, and was only intensified by the Saracen invasions which then took place, on to the close of the Saracenic rule and the rise of the Bagratian dynasty. These incessant national troubles account for the fact that during the four centuries which follow the golden age of Armenian literature there is little or no intellectual advance. This condition of mental torpor, due to the political circumstances of Armenia, was also in part the cause and in part the consequence of the rise of heresies and divisions in the national Church. These arose largely from the ignorance of the Church leaders.

* Chamich, vol. i., p. 323.

The Armenian Church remained in touch with the orthodox Greek and Latin Churches until the Council of Chalcedon, 451—the fourth General Council. The proceedings of this Council were fraught with disaster to the Armenian Church. The decrees of the three first Councils had been accepted by the Church of St. Gregory.

✧ Owing to a mistaken translation or some other cause, the Armenian Church condemned the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, on the assumption that they tolerated or approved the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies. This condemnation was finally and formally made at the Synod of Thevin, 536. It has thus ever since underlain a plausible charge of heresy. Hence we trace the first stages of the schism which in 551 clove asunder the ancient Armenian Church into the two sections of the Church of St. Gregory and the Georgian Church. The latter removed the ban from the Council of Chalcedon, and so came into line with the Greek Church.

✧ The Eastern and Western Armenian Churches were still further separated by some changes of ceremonial. The Western section began to use leavened bread and to mix the wine with water in the Eucharist. They also changed their Christmas Day to December 25, at the same time adopting some other innovations.*

* About this time, *i.e.* 562, the Armenian calendar was remodelled, and this date was fixed as the commencement of a new Haican era.

In order to understand the distinctive types of thought in the Eastern and Western Churches, and even the special heresies to which they gave rise, we must take into account the character and training of those who constituted their communions.

The Roman mind had for ages found the fullest exercise of its activities in the study of law. These habits of thought were brought to the problems of theology.

This peculiar influence was apparent in their first doctrinal discussions, and has continued to characterize those of subsequent times, as may be seen in the two great theological systems of the West, Arminianism and Calvinism, in regard to which it has been said, that it would be difficult to decide which is the more markedly legal in its tone.

Obligation, restitution, atonement, man everywhere in his legal relationships, such were the questions with which the Western Church chiefly busied herself. Far different were the problems which were moved in the Eastern Communion. The nature of the Godhead, the Divine attributes, the person of Christ, such were the subjects of eager and often bitter discussion in her councils.

Two distinct tendencies ere long appeared. The one, concentrating exclusively on the human, lost sight of the divine; the other, concentrating on the divine, lost sight of the human.

It was to the latter of these tendencies that the Armenian Church had now inclined.*

The fortunes of Armenia were now to be influenced by a new power, to which allusion has already been made, replacing that of the Sassanidæ, at Bagdad, in A.D. 637. This was the dominion of the Saracens—a general designation of the Greeks and Romans for the tribes inhabiting Arabia. Nothing is more striking, more of the essence of historical romance, than the origin and rapid advance of this new race of conquerors—the followers of their prophet Mahomet. When Mahomet died in A.D. 632, Arabia had been subdued. In the course of less than a generation, and within the reign of the first four caliphs, his successors, Syria, Persia and Egypt had also been conquered.

* 'One of the Vartabéds here [Uchkeliseh] . . . introduced, of his own accord, the monophysitism of his Church, by declaring that it receives only the first three of the General Councils. Nestorius, he said, held to a perfect separation of the Divinity and humanity of Christ, and Eutyches taught that his humanity is absorbed in his Divinity. The Armenians, agreeing with neither, believe that the two natures are united in one, and anathematize all who hold to a different creed. In this he spoke advisedly, for it is well known that Eutyches is acknowledged by neither of the three monophysite sects—the Armenian, the Jacobite Syrian, and the Coptic, including the Abyssinian, to which his controversy gave birth—and that his alleged dogma of a confusion in the natures of Christ is the reason of his rejection, though, perhaps, a candid investigation will hardly find him chargeable with such an opinion. Another intelligent ecclesiastic had told us that not only does his nation hold to one nature, but also to only one will, in Christ, thus making the Armenians partake in the monothelite as well as in the monophysite heresy.'—Smith and Dwight, 'Researches,' pp. 419-421.

The internal dissensions of the faithful, dividing them so early into Sunis and Shias (the latter of whom do not recognise the first three caliphs as true successors of the Prophet), did not prevent them from at once entering upon a course of conquest unrivalled in the history of the human race. We cannot here further describe this movement, as it spread eastward and westward, and threatened to revolutionize the history of the world.

The first conquest outside of Arabia—that of Syria—was also the first stroke dealt by the Saracens to the prestige of the old Greek Empire. The occupant of the throne of the Cæsars—Heraclius—saw the victorious Omar establish his Syrian capital at Damascus, amid indescribable carnage, in A.D. 636. Jerusalem was already in the hands of the infidel, and in A.D. 637 the Mosque of Omar was erected on the site of the ancient Jewish Temple. In the same year the Saracens, under their leader Abdorrahman, invaded Armenia, and imposed a tax on the males of the district of Taron, carrying away wives and children into captivity. The atrocities were renewed three years later, and such was the devastation of the whole country that the pontiff Ezzr died heart-broken for the sorrows of Armenia. The sack of Duin about this date recalls the horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem and the massacres of more modern times. Twelve thousand of its citizens were cruelly butchered, and

thirty-five thousand taken captive. For fully another generation there was a ceaseless and bloody struggle for the mastery of Armenia between the Saracen and the Greek emperors.

In A.D. 685, Ashot, a Bagratian chief, became Governor of Armenia, and made peace with the Saracens. Two years later the Saracens assumed the government of Armenia. In A.D. 704 one of their former oppressors, Abdullah, became Caliph of Damascus, and inflicted terrible sufferings on the Armenians.

In A.D. 743 the Saracens built Bagdad, levying heavy taxes on the Armenians in aid of this undertaking. To Bagdad, soon after, the caliphate was removed. From this new centre were sent forth a succession of merciless tyrants to perpetrate every description of Moslem crime on their miserable victims.

In A.D. 849 Armenia revolted from its Saracen masters. This was followed by a series of massacres, which may well rank side by side with the most tragic occurrences in the history of this ill-fated country.*

* See Father Chamich's History, vol. i., p. 404: 'He directed (Bulah) to march immediately into Armenia to take vengeance for the late defeat. Bulah also received orders to seize all the Armenian chiefs and send them in chains to Bagdad, and to kill all whom he found in a condition to carry arms. Any of the people, however, who consented to forsake Christianity and embrace the religion of the Saracens he received directions to spare, provided they were strong and handsome. If they were homely, notwithstanding their inclination to abjure their religion,

In due time a better relationship was established between Armenia and its superior, the Caliph of Bagdad, resulting in the change of government which will be considered in our next chapter.

The student of this period will find a suggestive theme in tracing the course of Armenian influence in connection with the rise and progress of the Byzantine Empire, from the time of Leo III., its first sovereign, and the founder of the Isaurian dynasty. Leo was himself a native of Armenia. From his time Armenians became a dominant power around the throne in Constantinople. Leo was the first Christian sovereign who arrested the tide of Mohammedan conquest. From the time of Heraclius the Roman Empire had seemed hastening to hopeless ruin. Leo has earned a right to be regarded as its saviour. He reorganized its government, corrected abuses in Church and State, and, in short, infused such life into all departments that it was now able to oppose a firm front to the assaults of the invader.

Another Armenian noble, Artavasados, son-in-law of Leo, assumed the purple, and bore the title of emperor for two years. Of the others who held this honour, the most distinguished was the Armenian Leo V. (813-820), who was chosen by the troops as the only one worthy to ascend the

they were to be delivered to the sword. The refuse of the people he was commanded not to notice, they being beneath the anger of the caliph.'

throne. It is also a suggestive circumstance that the Byzantine historians have claimed, by way of compliment, for Basil, the founder of a new dynasty, an Armenian descent.

These fragmentary references are sufficient to prove the high character of the Armenian, even during this period of terrible oppression, both for military and civil affairs.

We have thus had a passing glimpse of Armenia during her golden age. We have seen the Scriptures translated into her vernacular and circulated over the land. We have seen religion and literature shedding their united blessings on the people. Again the carnage is renewed, and a race of brave martyrs for their still young faith succeeds to a race of Christian scholars, whose function is to proclaim, expound, and enforce it by research and argument.

In these circumstances the Sword of God is unsheathed on the banks of the Yermuk, and that great victory is won the results of which were to influence so radically the destinies of Armenia, first from the supreme seat of the caliph in Damascus, and thereafter from his throne at Bagdad.

Through the mists of sorrow, of bewildering error in creed and life, Armenia is still holding on her way, not without indications of her high and commanding spirit, until an era is reached which once more carries with it the promise of a return of the long-lost sceptre of her kings to her still imperial hand.

CHAPTER IV.

Dynasty of the Bagratidæ—Rupenian Kingdom of Cilicia
—Relations with the Crusaders — Close of Armenian
Monarchy.

WE ought to premise that the term 'dynasty,' as applied to the rulers of Armenia during especially the periods known as those of the Bagratian and Rupenian rule, is rather a designation of courtesy than of correct description. During the long centuries of their blood-stained annals, they are seldom free from the oppressive patronage or undisguised tyranny of the Persian caliph, on the one hand, or the Greek emperor on the other.

When Ashot, the first of the Bagratian dynasty, assumed the sceptre of Armenia in 885, the two most interested powers, the Persian and Greek, were both favourable to this change, and no doubt both expected to benefit by it. Under these auspices a dynasty, the descendants of Sumbat and Bagarat, and hence of the direct line of Israel, took possession of the Armenian throne. During the period of wellnigh two hundred years of their troubled sway, the history of Armenia

has little other interest save what attaches to a condition of incessant commotion and massacre, arising from the alternating oppressions of Persians and Greeks, as they saw it to be for their advantage to intervene in her affairs. The effusive friendship of both Eastern and Western patrons had begun to visibly cool before a single generation of the new régime had passed away. Issuf, a creature of the Persian caliph, after carrying on hostilities against the Bagratian king, Sumbat I. (the second of the dynasty), seized him and tortured him to death. This miscreant continued his invasions of Armenia in the reign of Sumbat's successor, Ashot II., and spread desolation over the whole land.

Amid these troubles we need not wonder that the condition of the people was not progressive. There does not seem to have been much cultivation of either learning or piety in the pontifical circles, and what feeble Church life there was spent itself in fruitless controversy about the relations of the Armenian and Greek Churches and their doctrinal differences. Perhaps one of the most touching of all the testimonies to the genuine patriotism of the pontiffs of this era is the fact that more than one of them is related to have died of a broken heart for the sorrows of his countrymen.

Owing to the victories of the Byzantine arms, the Saracens were so weakened that the Christians of Armenia raised their banner, and, with the assistance of a division of Greek troops,

'pushed their conquests to the Lake of Van, and forced the Saracens of Aklat and Betlis not only to pay tribute, but to allow the cross to be elevated in their cities higher than the domes of their mosques.'

The Byzantines and Armenians were not long destined to fight their battles side by side. In 1022 the Emperor Basil II. compelled the Armenian king, Johannes Sumbat, to sign a treaty, ceding at his death the city of Ani, with the province in which it stood, to the Greeks. Constantine IX. called upon Gaghiik, the last of the Bagratian kings, to implement this treaty. On his refusal, Constantine, forming an alliance with the Saracen Emir of Tovin, laid siege to Ani. The treachery of the Armenian chiefs aided the project of the emperor. Gaghiik surrendered, and, receiving a safe conduct, set out to Constantinople to plead his cause. Meantime the city of Ani was captured by the Byzantine forces (1045). This fatal blow to the Bagratian monarchy, coming from the hand of a Christian power, destroyed not only an Armenian dynasty, but the only barrier to the advances of the Seljouk Turks. It was therefore in due time destined to recoil with direst results upon the head of the assailant.

Following close upon the surrender of Ani, the Seljouk Turks made repeated incursions into Armenia. In the third of these incursions they captured the city of Arzen, 'and massacred in

cold blood 140,000 people; the remnant they carried away into captivity.' The native historian adds that the same cruelties were perpetrated by this barbarous horde on many other cities of Armenia. Ani meantime was occupied by 60,000 Greek troops under the command of Camenas, and these were well pleased to look on with complacency at the sufferings of the Armenians.

In 1062, after the death of Togrul, his successor invaded Armenia and captured Ani.

The energetic reforming labours of the patriarch, Gregory Vikayaser (lover of martyrs), whose influence extends into the next dynasty, deserve mention here. Like his great predecessor, the Apostle of Armenia, whose name he assumed when he became pontiff, he retired from public life to end his days in devout seclusion. His retreat was the Black Mountain, in the regions of Taurus, where with a few friars he took up his residence.

We have now reached the close of our brief survey of the general character of the Bagratian dynasty. The termination of the chequered career of the exiled King Gaghiik is tragic in no ordinary degree. Father Chamich gravely relates how the exiled king visited Marcus, the Metropolitan of Cæsarea, with a few attendants. He had heard that Marcus kept a huge dog, which, to show his contempt, he named Armenian. Marcus made a show of giving the ex-king a cordial welcome, and prepared for him a feast.

on the evening of his arrival. Gaghiik desired his host to call his large dog. The animal, on being brought in, was saluted by his master by the name Armenian. On a given signal, the attendants of Gaghiik seized the dog and put him into a large bag. They forthwith threw the metropolitan in beside him, and securely fastened the bag. The dog was then severely beaten, and so, becoming furious, he worried his master to death. Falling into the hands of the Greeks, Gaghiik was, in revenge, subjected to the most horrid cruelties, and, after being put to death, his bloody corpse was suspended from the walls of Kigistra, to strike terror into his followers. So perished, says Chamich, Gaghiik in the fifty-fifth year of his age. He had been three years in possession of the throne of Armenia, and thirty-five years in exile. The same authority observes: 'A want of prudence removed the crown from the Arsacidæ, and a melancholy want of unanimity caused the downfall of the Bagratians.'

With the overthrow of the Bagratian dynasty, the fortunes of Armenia sunk to a still lower ebb than ever they had done before. A portion of the conquered dominions was seized by the Greeks, while the Turks and Kurds did their best to establish a claim to the rest. At this stage took place a general movement of the Armenians into different provinces of the Turkish Empire, particularly into the regions lying to the west and south of their ancient settlements. Only one or two

native princes continued to maintain their independence. Of these Rupen, related to the Bagratidæ, extended the limits of his dominions, and his successors advanced to Cilicia and Cappadocia, where they established what is known as the Rupenian kingdom and dynasty.

In the time of Rupen the patriarchate was weakened by divisions. Instead of one, the Armenian Church set up four rival pontiffs, but the general voice was in favour of St. Gregory, to whose character and reforms we have already alluded. Around him and successive pontiffs gathered groups of studious and scholarly men, whose names and works are still held in honour. While Rupen and his successors styled themselves kings, it was not until the time of Leo II. (1198) that the Rupenian kingdom was formally constituted and recognised by other powers. In that year, Pope Celestinus III., at the instigation of the German emperor (Henry VI.), sanctioned the coronation of Leo, and sent him a magnificent crown by the hand of Conrad, Archbishop of Moguntia. The emperor sent him at the same time a splendid standard, having in the middle a lion rampant, in allusion to his name. This device was henceforth adopted by the Armenian kings in lieu of the ancient design of the eagle, pigeon, and dragon.*

But we have anticipated the grand event which, in some measure, renders memorable

* Chamich, vol. ii., p. 215.

this era in the history of the Cilician kingdom of Armenia. This was its temporary connection with the Crusades. While the new sovereignty on the west of Asia Minor was struggling into and for existence first with Greeks, and then again with Persians, a new enterprise was rousing to its inmost depths the heart of the nations of Christian Europe. This was the conception of a grand Crusade, whose object should be to wrest Palestine and Jerusalem, and Constantinople as well, from the grasp of the infidel. It was true that at this stage the deliverance of Constantinople was only prospective, as it was not yet in the hands of the advancing foe. But it was easily seen that, with the Turkish camp already pitched on the eastern shore of the Bosphorus, this could only be a question of time. Peter the Hermit, laden with the benediction of Urban II., and supported by a countless host of warriors bearing on their breasts or shoulders the sign of the Red Cross, was now at Constantinople on the way to deliver Jerusalem. Under the leadership of Godfrey of Bouillon, this motley group had made its way to this its first friendly resting-place and object of succour.

Crossing into Asia Minor, it had found itself in the horrors of famine and pestilence. The Armenians both of Eastern and Western Asia sent abundant supplies, and by their seasonable services earned the gratitude of the leaders of the Crusade. The same friendly spirit was shown

also in the case of the second Crusade. On the capture of Jerusalem in 1099, the leader of the first Crusade sent the Armenian prince Constantine valuable presents, created him a marquis, and conferred on him the honour of knighthood.

Amid the turmoil of Saracen conquest, under Saladin, at Jerusalem (1187), Turkish raids and consequent capitation taxes, one sees, with some natural misgiving as to the result, a young girl of sixteen, the only child of the deceased Leo, ascend the throne of Armenia. The princess, however, is beloved from the first by her people, and though unfortunate in her first husband, and married against her better judgment to the second, she is every way worthy of her royal station. The name of Isabel, the daughter of Leo II., thus holds an honoured place among the rulers of Armenia.

But the troubles of the Armenians in Cilicia and elsewhere were increasing.

The Egyptian sultans, of the race of the Mamelukes, had been making repeated incursions in this direction, and spreading desolation over the kingdom of Western Armenia. As a Christian power, and one which had conspicuously aided in the enterprise of the Crusades, Armenia seemed to them a barrier to their scheme of conquest. The sultan, Shaban, accordingly resolved to utterly overthrow the dominion of the Rupenian kings, and to exterminate the nation. He marched into Cilicia at the head of a powerful

army, took possession of the capital, Sis (1374), and devastated the whole region, putting the inhabitants to the sword and demolishing all their convents, churches, and other buildings.* Leo VI. seeing no way of escape, surrendered to the conqueror (1375). He was put in chains, carried captive to Egypt, and spent seven years in prison in Cairo.

Released at last from his captivity, he visited Jerusalem, Rome, Spain, Paris, and even England. In vain did he appeal to Charles V. of France, and Richard II. of England, to embark on a new Crusade for the recovery of the Holy Land, and his own restoration to the throne of Armenia. He died in Paris, 1393. The dead body was decked out in white royal robes, according to the custom of his country, with an open crown upon his head and a golden sceptre in his hand.†

From this time Armenia can no longer lay claim to even the shadow of royalty. But the crown of martyrdom still remains, nor did the national aspirations perish with the extinction of the monarchy. We do not here enter into any discussion of the question as to whether Armenia has still claims to be regarded as a nation. This will appear more manifest as we continue our narrative. But we may note even at this stage that a claim to nationality is not

* Chamich, vol. ii., p. 305.

† Curzon's 'Armenia,' pp. 252, 253.

dependent on any form of civil government, and is not weakened by any circumstances of bondage and oppression.

The insignia of a national status are a common race, a common language, a common religion, and as the result, common aims and aspirations.

All these characters of nationality distinguish in a high degree and to the present hour the Armenian people. For long centuries they have been deepened under the influences of the national faith, however degenerate it may have often become, either in form or substance. Nor are there wanting in these times tokens of a widespread revival of the patriotic spirit.

Following close on the overthrow of the monarchy by the Mamelukes come the devastations of Timour, the Tartar sovereign (1403).*

The grim form also of a new tyrant is coming more and more clearly into view, as he makes his way through blood and slaughter to his seat on the throne of the old Greek emperors at Constantinople. Armenian royalty has indeed fallen, but another and more boastful sovereignty does not long survive. Twice over the grand old-world stage is cleared. The actors have come and gone, and all their scenic surroundings are gone with them. A new group is crowding on to the stage, and a new era has opened in the history of the world.

* Chamich, vol. ii., p. 315.

PART II.

*ARMENIA AND THE ARMENIANS UNDER TURKISH
MISRULE,—THE PRESENT CRISIS IN ARMENIA.*

CHAPTER I.

The Turks and Saracens—Seljouk Turks—Togrul Beg—
Rise of the Ottoman Empire—Fall of Constantinople—
Decline of the Ottoman Empire—Position of Armenia.

WITH the entrance of the Turkish despot upon his blood-stained career, first in Asia Minor and next in Eastern Europe, a new chapter opens, as we have already indicated, in the history of the world. To no portion of his dominions has this change of régime been fraught with more disastrous consequences than to Armenia, where he has indeed proved the very Scourge of God.

To understand, therefore, the tragedy of Armenian history in modern times, as well as what is known as the Eastern Question, as it concerns Armenia, we must be content to deal for a little with the Turkman and his aggressive movements.

The Turks, as this people have been designated from the Middle Ages, are a Scythian race. Their original haunts are to be found in Tartary, and are happily involved in an almost impenetrable cloud of obscurity. In the seventh century after

Christ, this pastoral, roving tribe had overrun and taken possession of the territory—wild and inhospitable as its rude invaders—lying between the Black and the Caspian Seas.

Urged on, like the tiger, by a native thirst for blood and brute force supremacy, they were soon engaged in endless strife with all comers, and with all others who could not keep out of the course of their predatory incursions. The first time we hear of their connection with civilization, and with the reigning power in Constantinople, is when, while still a horde of lawless marauders, scattered over his Eastern dominion, Heraclius, the Greek emperor, succeeded in securing them as his allies in his campaigns against the Persians, about 622.

They shared in the triumph of that great general on his return to his capital on the Bosphorus.

Their next alliance was with the Saracen caliphs, to whom for a time they acted as a body-guard. It was then and afterwards the custom of Oriental sovereigns to depend, in emergencies, on a royal guard of foreigners rather than of their own proper subjects, as more likely, among other reasons, to remain aloof from contending factions, and to espouse on all occasions the quarrel of their paymaster. Hence, we have the Armenian guard (while that people still claimed national independence) and the Varangians at the court of Constantinople, the

Mamelukes in Egypt, and the Janissaries of the Moslem sovereigns.

To the Saracens the Turk was drawn by numerous affinities. As long as the Saracens remained united and devoted to the one purpose of extending the faith of the Prophet, they carried everything before them. In the tenth century they were the most successful warriors in Asia and Europe, and their conquests extended from India in the Far East to the Pillars of Hercules in the Far West.* Yet in this same century the Saracen Empire was dismembered, and the sultans of different countries began to contend for supremacy.

The Saracens, then, while still enveloped in this halo of military glory, not only gratified the warlike propensities of their Scythian ally, but gave him, what he chiefly prized, a Divine sanction for all his nameless barbarities as directed against the infidel. Such, at least, was the Turk's conception or misconception of the provisions of his new-found military creed. In excess of zeal, the neophyte soon surpassed his instructor. It is this picture of a Mohammedan savage which Moore draws with such a masterly hand in the well-known lines :

' Hard, heartless chief, unmoved alike
'Mid eyes that weep and swords that strike,

* Hallam, 'Europe during the Middle Ages,' chapter vi. :
'History of the Greeks and Saracens.'

One of that saintly, murderous brood
To carnage and the Koran given,
Who think through unbelievers' blood
Lies their directest path to heaven ;
One who will pause and kneel unshod
In the warm blood his hand hath poured,
To mutter o'er some text of God
Engraven on his reeking sword ;
Nay, who can coolly mark the line,
The letter of those words Divine,
To which his blade with searching art
Had sunk into his victim's heart.'

From being the mere acolyte of the Saracen, the Turk became himself the superior. In due time he no longer cared to cultivate an alliance in which he was regarded as little else than the ready tool of a power now entering upon the stage of decline. Withdrawing for a time from the position of an ally, the Turkish freebooter found congenial occupation in robbing and slaughtering his hapless neighbours.

At last the motley host found a leader worthy of their cause in Togrul Beg, grandson of Seljouk, a notable chief, who had undergone conversion to the Moslem faith. We need not be too inquisitive about the antecedents of the new convert, but he was a brave soldier and an ardent believer. His family had resided during a brief season in Armenia, from which they had carried away, if nothing else, at least a deep-rooted hatred of the precepts of the Christian faith.

Togrul was not without the graces of his great ancestor Seljouk ; his personal devotion to Islamism was even more conspicuous.

The hour had now come when the Turk must choose for himself a king, and by universal acclaim this honour fell to Togrul. Taken almost directly from the sheepfold, Togrul thus became the first of a dynasty of shepherd-kings. Under such auspices arose the empire of the Seljouk Turk. His accession to the throne was signalized by a formal acceptance by himself and his followers of the creed of Islam as the national religion.

The accession of Togrul dates from 1038, when, having made himself master of Ispahan and Bagdad, he was crowned Sultan of Persia, and received the title of Defender of the Faith and Protector of the Caliph of Bagdad.

In 1052 Togrul began that series of invasions of the Byzantine dominions which was, in the end, to prove so disastrous to the independence of Armenia. The discipline and valour of the Franks and the Verangian guard so impressed him that he retired from his meditated attack on Constantinople without hazarding an engagement.

In 1055 he vindicated his title to the Protector of the Caliph of Bagdad, by espousing successfully his side in a contest for superiority incited by the Caliph of Egypt.

His successor, Alp Arslan, took up the pious scheme of Togrul, and carried devastation and ruin into the ancient kingdom of Armenia. In the

person of Malekshah, the son of Alp Arslan, the Seljouk dynasty reached the zenith of its power, and this Sultan was dignified with the title of the Commander of the Faithful. The rest of the history of the dynasty (extending in all from 1038 to 1307) is a record of disunion and gradual decay. The final dissolution was hastened by the irruptions of Genghis Khan, but ere this time a new master was eagerly pressing forward his claims to sovereign empire.

In this season of dissolution of the Seljouk and enfeeblement of the Greek empires, a tribe of nomad Turks, under their leader Orthogrul, had settled in the dominions of Aladin, the last of the Sultans of Iconium. He had pitched his camp of four hundred tents on the banks of the Sangar, where he ruled as a petty independent chief under the ægis of the expiring Sultan. To his descendants belongs the distinction of laying, broad and deep, the foundations of an empire of which it has been said that it advanced to greatness more rapidly than that of Rome, and whose power has proved more durable than the empire of Alexander. The honour of this achievement belongs, in the first place, to the son of Orthogrul, who began his reign in 1299, and continued to extend and wisely govern his dominions for the next twenty-seven years. The times were favourable for his ambitious enterprise. The Seljouk dynasty was defunct. The Greek Empire was also exhibiting symptoms of decay, and lay exposed by

the blunders of its rulers to an inroad of the adversary through the now defenceless passes of Olympus. The failure also of the Crusaders might well suggest dreams of conquest were the Moslem now in his turn to inaugurate an era of a *gazi*, or holy war, against the infidels at Constantinople and elsewhere.

In 1299, accordingly, Othman entered Nicomedia, and gave his name to a new race of Turkish sovereigns, and to what has from this period been known as the Othman or Ottoman Empire. The origin of this new dynasty is computed from the occupation of Brusa as the capital, an event which took place in the closing years of the reign of Othman. Marvellous as was the success of Othman, it was yet exceeded by the victories of his son Orkhan, who was not less great in peace than he was in war. In a higher sense than can be said of his father Othman, Orkhan stands forth as the real founder of the Ottoman dominion. 'He is,' says Finlay, 'one of the few legislators who created a nation and founded an empire by his own legislative enactments.'

Having gone into some detail as to the rise of the Ottoman Empire, we shall now pass very rapidly over our survey of its progress and the circumstances of its incipient decline. The institution of the military force of the Janissaries belongs to the reign of Orkhan. In the reign of his successor, Amurath I., the Turk had

crossed the Bosphorus, and Adrianople became the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Bajazet, his successor, carried his victorious arms from the Euphrates to the Danube. But for his defeat by Timour at Angora, 1402, there is little doubt he would have forestalled the overthrow of the Byzantine Empire by half a century. But the hitherto irrepressible Turkish Sultan was thus arrested in his victorious progress to what seemed boundless European conquest, confined in an iron cage, and carried to Samarcand, where he died in captivity. The Ottoman Empire was now somewhat consolidated under Mahomet I. The aggressive operations were once more resumed under Mahomet's successor, Amurath II., who laid siege to the Greek capital, Constantinople.

In 1453, Mahomet II., the most remarkable, perhaps, of all the sultans, stormed and took the city which was henceforth to be the seat of the Ottoman Empire.

The siege and fall of Constantinople rank among the most imposing events in the transition from ancient to modern history. Constantine XI., the last of the Greek Cæsars, had appealed for help to the Christian powers of Europe—but in vain. The disputes between the Eastern and Western Churches had rendered the prospect of the fall of the former a matter of indifference, if not an object of desire, to the Papal see. The spirit of the Crusades was also

largely quenched, and so the citadel of Eastern Christendom, in its hour of supreme need, was left to its own unaided resources. We cannot rehearse the story of the fifty-three days' siege. The forces of the attack and the defence were in sad and suggestive contrast. Around a city, whose Greek population the recent calamities had reduced to about 100,000 souls, with an enfeebled garrison, there gathered the 258,000 soldiers of the Turk, with 320 sail, including all kinds of craft.

The day fixed for the final onslaught, *i.e.*, May 29, 1453, was set apart by the Sultan as a religious festival.

The preceding night witnessed a magnificent illumination of the Moslem camp and ships, transforming the harbour of the Golden Horn, and its vicinity, into a scene of splendour such as, perhaps, had never been witnessed before, or was ever to be witnessed again in the history of Oriental display.

The stated calls to prayer rose upon the still air without, while the pathetic cry of 'Kyrie eleeson' resounded within the doomed city.

The attack commenced in the early morning, and by mid-day Mahomet II. was riding in triumph into his new capital by the gate of St. Romanos. He rode past the dead body of the Greek emperor, buried beneath a heap of the slain. The grand old emperor, whose courage

had supported his people through the horrors of the siege, had already taken his last Sacrament in the Church of St. Sophia, and bidden farewell to his household, ere he went forth cheerfully to sacrifice his life in defence of the throne of the Cæsars. But the heroic effort was in vain. The blow long pending had fallen : the Roman Empire was no more.

From that period onward, for over two hundred years, the Turkish warriors were the terror and amazement of Europe. They conquered and annexed, to a large extent, the old territories of Greece and Epirus, also Bulgaria, Servia, Bosnia, and the countries up to the Danube. The Ottoman Empire had become in the reign of Solyman the Magnificent (1520) the most powerful in the world. In every quarter, east or west, on even to the Portuguese dominions in India, he carried forward his conquests. In his reign, historians agree, the Crescent had attained its utmost altitude.

Before we notice the causes and stages by which this imposing fabric began to hasten to its decay, we may here mention some of the chief causes which are supposed to account for its rapid rise and progress. These causes were the superior discipline of the Turkish soldier, the existence of a standing army, a well-regulated system of finance, and, lastly, the efficiency of the artillery. The Turks were the first to

adopt the extensive use of gunpowder, and the use of battering-trains in the siege of fortified places.

Over and above all this we must place their religious fanaticism—the fanaticism of the banner—which so incited and exalted in their heated imagination their native propensities to relentless spoliation and oppression of the infidel. New influences, however, were now at work, and had been for some half a century, which were destined gradually to undermine the vast superstructure of an alien dominant race at Constantinople. These consisted partly in a series of disasters to the Turkish arms, partly in the steadily ascending power of Russia.

In the reign of Selim II. the tide had fairly turned. The battle of Lepanto, in 1571, gave the first overt signal to Europe of the change in the fortunes of the empire. The prestige of former exploits, however, continued to stand them in good stead until their defeat in 1664 at St. Gothard, by Montecuculi. In 1673 they were again still more signally defeated by Sobieski. The conclusive proof that the Turkish Samson (to adopt the happy phrase of De Quincey) was at last shorn of his strength was not afforded until the great catastrophe of 1683, five years before the English Revolution. In that year an army of 150,000 Turks undertook the siege

of Vienna, and a thrill of horror passed over the Christian world.

Then one of those daring feats was undertaken, and accomplished, which justify what otherwise might be denounced as culpable rashness.* The Polish patriot Sobieski, at the head of a heterogeneous host, less than half the number of the enemy, fell upon, defeated, and utterly routed this formidable army.

The victory over the Turks was followed by the treaty of Carlovitz, in 1699, which stripped the Porte of Transylvania, Hungary, the Ukraine, and other provinces. The seat of the Turkish Sultan was now becoming increasingly unsafe and uneasy. The Janissaries, who were wont to constitute a redoubtable bodyguard to a strong ruler in prosperous times, now grew discontented and insubordinate. In short, things had come to such a pass that 'Europe ceased to dread the Turks, and began even to look upon their

* 'Oh for a kindling touch from that pure flame
Which ministered erewhile to a sacrifice
Of gratitude beneath Italian skies
In words like these : Up, voice of song, proclaim
Thy saintly rapture with celestial aim ;
For, lo, the imperial city stands released
From bondage threatened by the embattled East,
And Christendom respire ; from guilt and shame
Redeemed, from miserable fear set free,
By one day's feat, one mighty victory.
Chant the deliverer's praise in every tongue !
The Cross shall spread, the Crescent hath waxed dim
He conquering, as in joyful heaven is sung—
He conquering through God, and God through him.'

Wordsworth.

existence as a necessary element of the balance of power among its states.’*

During the period we have been reviewing, Armenia continued to be the battle-ground between the Turk and the Persian. From the time of Selim II. it may be said to have been incorporated with the Turkish dominion. In the wars of Turk and Persian, Armenia was again and again devastated, and its inhabitants subjected, as so often in later times, to the cruelty and lust of the soldiers. A great calamity befell the Armenians in 1605, when Shah Abbas overran the country, perpetrated great cruelties on the people, and transported twelve thousand families to Ispahan, in Persia.

We do not purpose to follow the course of the history of the relations of the Turk and the Armenian into detail, on through the period of the dispersion of the latter over the Ottoman Empire, and beyond its bounds, until they come in recent times into prominence through the operation of those causes which have given rise to the Eastern Question, as it respects Armenia in particular, and especially to those massacres of our own day, which are the reproach, not only of the misrule of the Turk, but also of the civilization of modern Europe. But in order that we may approach those more critical, and let us hope the final, stages of the tragedy, with

* Gordon's 'History of the Greek Revolution.'

a better understanding of its character and malign design, we must linger a little longer over the constitution of the Turkish Government, the relation of Turkish fanaticism to civil and religious liberty, and, above all, towards the Christian faith.

CHAPTER II.

Islam as the Religion of the Turk—Youth of Mahomet—Mahomet at Mecca—Temptations of Mahomet—The Sword and the Koran—Influence of Islam on the Character and Government of the Turk—Forced Conversions.

WE have already referred to the conversion of the Turk, and the motives which led him to embrace the faith of Islam so far as they bore upon his military career. This change of religion had also far-reaching results on his whole character, and particularly as the despotic ruler of a great empire. This was most conspicuously illustrated in connection with his Christian subjects. These were found in far greater numbers under the Moslem dominion of the Turk than in any other of the earlier conquests of the followers of the Prophet. In Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Persia, the subject races, with the exception of the second of these countries, were less obnoxious to the Defender of the Faith of Islam than those of an empire which comprehended within its limits the two earliest nations

to embrace the religion of Christ. Of these, for many obvious reasons, Armenia has been by far the greatest sufferer.

To understand this state of affairs, we must not only have some knowledge of the character of the Turkish barbarian, but of the new religion of which he is, in many respects, the most remarkable proselyte. We have, therefore, to look a little more closely at what Islamism really is, and how it originated.

This will be best done by a slight sketch of its founder Mahomet, and its exposition in the Koran.

Little is known of Arabia before the seventh century. There are floating traditions of Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael, associated especially with Mecca and the Kaaba. On one point all seem agreed, that there was no record of a rise and progress—that, in short, the Arabia of the seventh century did not materially differ from the Arabia of Abraham and Job. The tribes existed in separate divisions and subdivisions, defying all attempts at national union until the appearance of Mahomet. As to its religious condition, a deep-rooted system of idolatry, whose headquarters were at Mecca, had existed for untold ages, and seemed as firmly planted on its soil as the rugged, bleak mountain ranges which stretched along its inhospitable interior. The Christian missionary had been repelled from its borders by its colonies of hostile Jews, and by an idolatrous

system which had incorporated much of a corrupt Judaism into its national rites. Nor in any case was it easy to evangelize the ever-restless Bedouin, who was no sooner caught than he was sure to find some means of eluding the fixed grasp of the missionary. To Mahomet belongs the distinction of welding these heterogeneous elements into a single mass, and bringing them in his own lifetime under the sway of a common faith.

Mahomet was born at Mecca, August 20, 570. His father's name was Abdallah, the son of Abdal Muttalib, the foremost chief of Mecca and guardian of the Kaaba. He belonged to the Koreish tribe, whose chief enjoyed the honour of holding the charge of this central sanctuary of idolatrous pilgrimage.

Mahomet's father died before the birth of his son, and his mother Amina only survived until he was seven years of age. The orphan boy was committed to the tender care of his grandfather, whom he was wont to accompany to the Kaaba, until the death of the latter, which happened at the end of the second year of his custody of the child. After this he was taken in charge by his uncle Abu Talib, who cared for him with parental fondness, as long as he needed such assistance. With him the orphan boy went on a journey to Syria, and was initiated into the mysteries of Arab mercantile life. But the lad was more given to solitary musing than noisy public affairs, and found, perhaps, more congenial occupation as a

youthful shepherd tending his sheep on the mountain slopes which overhung his native Mecca. In after-years he was wont to recur lovingly to the memory of these happy, peaceful days, recalling as they did to him the similar avocations of Moses and David, and he would declare to his followers, 'Verily there hath been no prophet raised up who performed not the work of a shepherd.'

The youth of Mahomet was characterized by noble aspirations, by exemplary purity, and by a deeply meditative nature. The sights of Mecca naturally led his acute mind to muse on the folly of idolatrous practices, of which he was a daily witness. Its victims seemed to him, to borrow the metaphor of the Koran, as shipwrecked sailors tossed upon a tempestuous sea, with dark thunder clouds rolling over their heads.

When twenty-five years old, he married Khadija of the same tribe, a noble and wealthy lady, who proved the guardian angel of a long period of his life. Mahomet is described as, at this period, in the flush of youthful manhood, of striking and attractive personal appearance. He was slightly above the middle height, of spare though handsome figure. His head was of the largest calibre, with regal brow. His hair was glossy as a raven's wing, and fell slightly curling over his ears. The eye was dark, flashing, piercing, and the face glowed with animation and intelligence.*

* Sir W. Muir's 'Life of Mahomet,' p. 26.

This commanding presence was a gift which no doubt served the prophet well in his stormy intercourse with his tribesmen at the outset of his career, as well as with others, and at a later stage in his enterprise.

During the early period of his married life, Mahomet was content to enjoy the quiet peace of a happy home. The period, however, of dreams and visions of a higher vocation has begun. He is anxious to assure himself that he has a divine mission to regenerate his people. At length he announces the assurance has been given. He has met with the Angel Gabriel, who brings him his commission, and sends him forth with his message. The supernatural appearance and the message verbally inspired, are minutely set forth.

Returning from the scene of revelation in the cave on Mount Hira, Mahomet becomes for the next ten years an unwearied and vehement preacher of his evangel to the people of Mecca and outlying mission fields. That evangel was little else than the world-wide text of Islam: 'There is no other god but Allah, and Mahomet is the prophet of God.*' It was a direct attack on the ancestral

* 'Nothing,' says De Quincey, 'but the grossest ignorance in Mahomet, nothing but the grossest non-acquaintance with Greek authors on the part of the Arabs, could have created or sustained the delusion current amongst that illiterate people that it was themselves only who rejected Polytheism. Had but one among the personal enemies of Mahomet been acquainted with Greek, there was an end of the new religion in the first moon of its existence. Once open the eyes of the

and all other idolatry. Converts came in slowly, and from the immediate circle of his relatives and friends. First came Khadija; then the circle widened, until, at the close of the first year's labours, he had some forty followers.

As partial success appeared, the Koreish tribe were alarmed; and during the remainder of the prophet's ministry in Mecca, he and his followers were the subject of a fierce persecution. In 621 Khadija died, and almost immediately thereafter took place the Hegira, or flight to Medina. It was preceded by some astute negotiations with the leaders of his adherents in Medina, and by fresh revelations. The faith in his Divine mission was not wont to fail him in even the direst emergencies. On the eve of his flight he was driven, along with his faithful companion Abu-Beker, to seek refuge in a cave near Mecca on the summit of Mount Thaur. It was here his comrade whispered, that they were only two as against a host of the enemy. 'Think not thus, Abu Beker,' was the reply; 'we are two, but God is in the midst—a third.'

Arabs to the fact that the Christians had anticipated them in this great truth of the Divine unity, and Mahometanism could only have ranked as a sub-division of Christianity. Mahomet would have ranked only as a Christian schismatic, such as Nestorius or Marcian at one time, such as Arius or Pelagius at another. In his character of theologian, therefore, Mahomet was simply the most memorable of blunderers, supported in his blunders by the most unlettered of nations.'—De Quincey's *Historical Essays* ('Greece under the Romans'), pp. 276, 277.

The date of the Hegira is June 20th, 622. We cannot enter into a description of the next ten years, the remaining period of Mahomet's life. During that period Medina was the centre of those forays and battles in which Arabia was at last subdued to Islam. We shall not here trace the course of the successive temptations before which Mahomet fell until at last he gave out that he had received a Divine commission to propagate his religion by the sword.

Students of his life have been struck by the parallel between the temptations of Mahomet and those of the Saviour in the wilderness.

They were, in the case of Christ, temptations to employ supernatural power for the supply of personal wants, and the extension of His dominion by illegitimate means, as well as to convert that spiritual dominion into a coarse and evanescent worldly power. In the case of our Lord the temptation was strengthened by the long cherished desire and expectation of the Jews for a great temporal prince in the person of their Messiah.

The victory of Christ has transmitted to His followers the heritage of a perfect character, and an enduring empire over the hearts and consciences of men.

The failure of Mahomet, under the same ordeal, has bequeathed to the motley throng of his devotees the record of a broken character, which does not improve with years, of a corrupt worldly policy, and a dominion of brute

force which has been long sinking to hopeless decay.

The progress of Mahomet's own spiritual life may be best studied in the successive Sôwar of the Koran.* They reveal its original sincerity and depth, but they show also to the careful student the not less certain marks of later degeneracy. The Koran grows worse and worse as it advances to completion. Its closing utterances lack the inspiration and high ideal of the earlier sôwar. A similar decline appears in the character of Mahomet himself. He exchanges a life of purity for the indulgences of the sensualist. He turns the very Koran itself into an apologist for his vices.

As to the relation of Mahomet to Christianity, he gives it honourable mention in the Koran. Yet all its distinctive doctrines are either ignored or repudiated, such as the divinity of Christ, His atonement and resurrection. This may have been partly due to ignorance, but largely also, there can be no doubt, to an instinctive recoil from its pure and lofty spirit. As Mahomet laid the reins upon the neck of his lusts, and began to wield the

* 'The Koran is divided into one hundred and fourteen larger portions of very unequal length, which we call chapters, but the Arabians Sôwar, in the singular Sûra, a word rarely used on any other occasion, and properly signifying a row, order, or regular series. . . . It is the same in use and import with the Sûra or Tora of the Jews, who also call the fifty-three sections of the Pentateuch Sedarim, a word of the same signification.'—Sale's Koran, 'Preliminary Discourse,' pp. 40, 41.

sword in the promotion of his cause, his deep hatred of the Christian religion becomes the more apparent, as seen in the mirror of the Koran. The Christian comes, in the mind of the prophet, to rank with the unbeliever. His was the very worst form of infidelity.

It has been said that the Mohammedan religion is considerate in its directions for the treatment of the unbeliever. It does not, it has been pleaded, encourage its followers to kill their enemies, though it fails to restrain the human disposition to do so. Now, the Moslem Turk at least was never much concerned about extracting from the contradictory doctrines of his faith a code of exemplary toleration, supposing such to be found in it. Enough for him that it does not restrain his human, or, rather, inhuman, disposition to massacre, lust and spoliation. 'The sword,' says Mahomet, 'is the key of heaven and hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer: whosoever falls in battle his sins are forgiven; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion and odoriferous as musk, and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim.'

The question now arises, How does all this bear on the character of the Turk and his government of an empire embracing, as we have seen, so considerable a section of a Christian population?

We have considered how Islamism affects the character of the Turk as a warrior and conqueror. We have now to inquire how far it helps or hinders him in the nobler task of ruling his conquered dominions. The Mohammedan religion, in its aggressive character, has been compared to a mighty rushing flood, whose tendency, as it flows on, is to purify its waters. But when its inspiring battle-cry dies away into silence, and peace comes to claim its victories, Islamism becomes this same stream gathering in a sluggish pestilent swamp, a reservoir of ever-exhaling corruption.

The process of deterioration was therefore not at first apparent in the rule of the earlier caliphs, Abu Beker, Omar, Othman, and Ali. As an illustration of their simplicity and austerity of life, the dialogue between the Emperor Heraclius and one of the faithful on the entry of Omar into Jerusalem has been often instanced. 'Why,' inquired the emperor, 'does he go in patched clothes, and not richly clad like other princes?' 'Because he cares only for the world to come, and seeks favour in the eyes of God alone.' 'In what kind of palace does he reside?' 'In a house built of mud.' 'Who are his attendants?' 'Beggars and the poor.' 'What tapestry does he sit upon?' 'Justice and equity.' 'What is his throne?' 'Abstinence and true knowledge.' 'What is his treasure?' 'Trust in God.' 'And what his guards?' 'The bravest of the Unitarians.'

The above colloquy could hardly, by any stretch of imagination, be supposed to describe either the character or habits of life of the caliphate succession, which has now, for five hundred years and upwards, revelled amid the delights of the paradise of the Sultan in Constantinople.

‘A rapid degeneracy,’ says Hallam, ‘enfeebled the victorious Moslems in their career. . . . Such is the outline of Saracenic history for three centuries after Mahomet—one age of glorious conquest; a second of stationary, but rather precarious, greatness; a third of rapid decline.’

The vices of the Saracen were reproduced and intensified in Islamism as represented in the person of the Turk. The Turkish sovereigns also who ruled at Bagdad were outdone in degeneracy by their successors, the caliphs of Constantinople.

In regard to government, the Moslem civil law is based on the Koran, as the civil laws of the Jews were on those of the Pentateuch. The author of the Koran was familiar enough with anarchy and despotism, but ignorant of Roman jurisprudence, or of the elementary principles of constitutional government. The idea of religious toleration will be sought for in vain from such a source. In its place will be found the injunction to war to the death against the infidel. The Moslem is wont to parade his toleration even in the face of this. This is especially so as regards the Turkish despot. We admit that more than one Sultan has played at a game of toleration, and

proved an expert in that exercise. They have formulated the principle in treaties with other governments, as it has suited their convenience, but never attempted seriously to carry it into practice. Despotic as the Sultan is, he is not above the sacred law of the prophet; by it he rules, and must rule. He must also receive the law as expounded by the Sheik-ul-Islam, the head of the Ulema, or general body of the lawyers and theologians.

This law, as we have said, gives clear directions as to the treatment of the infidel. The non-Moslem, and especially the Christian, is to be treated harshly, beaten and dragged along the ground if he prove unable or unwilling to pay the excessive taxation—a ransom for the right to drag on a miserable and forfeited existence. To enable his oppressor to carry out his purpose—to perpetrate every description of injustice and indignity—the law forbids the non-Moslem to carry arms. The Christian is thus left defenceless amid his deadliest enemies, armed to the teeth, on every side of him. He must not wear the same colour of clothes, or enter the same bath with a Moslem. The non-Moslem must treat his oppressor with ceremonious respect, in all possible and impossible forms. Any failure in this is punishable with death.

Nor are these oppressions only to be found in the degenerate legislation of the Turk. The following passage from Washington Irving's 'Suc-

cessors of Mahomet ' furnishes a striking illustration of the spirit of Islam *before* it was still further corrupted by Turkish influence: ' The articles of surrender (of Jerusalem) were drawn up in writing by Omar, and served afterwards as a model for the Moslem leaders in other conquests. The Christians were to build no new churches in the surrendered territory. The church doors were to be set open to travellers, and free egress to be permitted to Mohammedans by day and night. The bells should only toll, and not ring, and no crosses should be erected on the churches, nor shown publicly in the streets. The Christians should not teach the Koran to their children, nor speak openly of their religion, nor attempt to make proselytes, nor hinder their kinsfolk from embracing Islam. They should not assume the Moslem dress, either cap, slippers, or turban, nor part their hair like Moslems, but should always be distinguished by girdles. They should not use the Arabian inscriptions on their signets, nor salute after the Moslem manner, nor be called by Moslem surnames. They should rise on the entrance of a Moslem, and remain standing until he should be seated. They should entertain every Moslem traveller three days gratis. They should sell no wine, bear no arms, and use no saddle in riding; neither should they have any domestic who had been in Moslem service. Such were the degrading conditions imposed upon the proud city of Jerusalem, once the glory and terror of

the East, by the leader of a host of wandering Arabs. They were the conditions generally imposed by the Moslems in their fanatical career of conquest. Utter scorn and abhorrence of their religious adversaries formed one of the main pillars of their faith.'

It appears, then, that even from the outset of Mohammedan dominion, and when the sword was just transferred, still warm, from the hand of Abu Beker, the immediate successor of the prophet to his intimate friend and faithful follower Omar, 'utter scorn and abhorrence of their religious adversaries formed one of the main pillars of their faith.'

This accounts not only for individual oppressive enactments, but the whole character of Moslem legislation. The administration of the law has been carried on in the same spirit. And this applies, of course to all its departments, civil and religious.

Not only in all the social relations of daily life do we find this demoniac influence operative. It shapes the whole ordeal of procedure in the gravest concerns of life and death, in and around every Moslem tribunal. No evidence from the lips of a Christian, in a court of justice, is considered of any value as against a Mussulman. Any lying story from the Mussulman is legal evidence against the Christian. It is a capital crime to convert a Moslem to the Christian faith. Yet the self-complacent despot prides himself on his liberal, large-hearted toleration.

These evils we may expect to see in their worst form in the person of the ruling Turk. His relation to Islamism so far explains this. Possessed as he is of the qualities which befit the lawless freebooter—the qualities of courage and enterprise—he could not fail to be fascinated by the bloodthirsty spirit of Islamism as a military code. As a system of revealed truth, which it claims to be, the Turk was mainly interested in the sanction it gave to his propensities for war and plunder. Elaborate propositions of principles of government were alien to one who saw no reason why his trusty sword should not serve him equally well for a sceptre as it had done as a weapon of conquest. On these matters it was not easy to bring such a neophyte as the Turk up to a respectable standard of even Mohammedan orthodoxy. Though changed by the influences of Islamism in a very sensible degree, he could hardly be said to be soundly converted. Accordingly, when he assumed the position of a ruler, a legislator, or administrator of the law, he carried with him into those high functions the instincts and training of his unregenerate existence.

Our discussion of the relation of Islamism to the Christian religion could not, we think, be more fittingly closed than by a reference to the most recent evidence submitted to the British Parliament on the subject of forced conversions to Mohammedanism.* That evidence establishes the

* Blue Book, Turkey, No. 5 (1896). Reports by Vice-Consul FitzMaurice.

fact beyond all possibility of cavil, in spite of all that has been said of Moslem toleration, that forced conversions to Islam are going on, as the outcome of a system of organized outrage and massacre, instigated by the Turkish government. This is, of course, no new thing in Turkey, but the scale of magnitude is certainly more appalling than on most former occasions.

Mr. FitzMaurice's report comes to us with the authority of an eye and ear witness, and also of one writing under a strong sense of official responsibility. He has made searching inquiry, as British delegate to the Turkish commission at Birejik, into the state of matters in the vilayet of Aleppo, and particularly at Birejik, Ourfa, Adiaman, Severek, Behesni and neighbouring districts. He has proved by careful induction of facts that over 6,000 forced conversions of Armenians to Islam have quite recently taken place within the single vilayet of Aleppo, and as the outcome of a scheme of avowed extermination of the infidel.

The story of the massacres and conversions at Birejik alone is ample proof of the charges involved, and is, besides, as told by the vice-consul, of such thrilling interest as can never be forgotten by the most cursory reader.

For two months the Armenian quarter in Birejik was a scene of Moslem outrage, of daily, hourly mortal agony under present and prospective sufferings. Life had become an ordeal of protracted misery and degradation. But the worst

still remained to be experienced. On the morning of January 1st, 1896, the trumpet sounded forth the summons to enter upon the massacre. The assailants rushed upon the Armenian quarter of 240 houses. They 'were divided into three parties, one to break in the doors and walls, the second to plunder, and the third to massacre all males above a certain age.' Every house was pillaged, the churches desecrated and reduced to ruins. The perpetrators of these crimes boldly declared that they were acting under the orders of the Sultan. 'Our Padishah,' they said, 'has ordered that the Armenians are to be massacred, and that no Christians are to be left in the country.'

As the proceedings of this fatal day drew to a close, the infuriated mob were just about to break into the houses of one or two Mussulmans who had sheltered the fugitives, with loud cries of extermination to the infidel, when an event occurred which arrested the awful carnage. We give it in the words of the Vice-Consul: 'Seeing their desperate determination to break in and exterminate the Christians, an Armenian woman ascended to the roof with a white flag, and declared that they had all become Mussulmans. The remaining Armenians thereupon repeated the formula of the Moslem creed, and the mob was induced to retire on the ground that they were now attacking their fellow Mussulmans.' Such is the character of the present conversions to

Islam, which the Sultan recognises as genuine, and cannot see his way to discourage.

In the case of these Armenians, there was no ground for any charge of political agitation. Their only offence was that they were Christians. For such in Turkey, so far as the Sultan dares to touch them, the alternative is a horrible death, or apostasy from their faith.

To renounce the new creed thus imposed upon them is also death by the Sheri Law, as interpreted and executed by the Mussulman. A return to the Christian faith by these Armenians would, therefore, bring about another wholesale massacre. Nay, the very appeal to outside Christian sympathy is a capital offence by the Sheri Law.

Mr. FitzMaurice is well aware that his statements constitute a grave charge against the Ottoman Government, and is duly impressed with the responsibility of embodying them in an official report. On the subject of the forced conversions he thus sums up: 'This conversion question, if not the most serious, is the ugliest feature of recent massacres. It is also the most difficult of remedy, for, though enlightened interpretations of the Mussulman religious and civil law do not sanction such peculiar changes of religion, yet the ignorant masses of the Mussulman population, whose fanaticism has been deeply stirred, and who have now for some time regarded and treated the new converts as Moslems,

would, in case of their reverting to Christianity, consider them as renegades, and thus punishable by death, according to the precepts of the Koran.'

Here for the present we must conclude our survey.

In our episode we have sought to trace some portions of the career of the man whose spirit lives and breathes in all Moslem rule. We have looked upon him in the freshness and purity of his youth, and as at the close of his ever-memorable career, he bequeaths to his followers as his last woeful legacy his Koran and his sword, the instruments of his temporal greatness, and the memorials of his betrayal of a heaven-sent trust.

We have witnessed the accession and new-born zeal of the Turkish proselyte to the faith of Islam. We have noted the spirit and some of the maxims which characterize his despotic rule. We have further shown by bringing our survey down to the present day that this spirit and these baleful influences are still at work, and with as disastrous, if not more disastrous, consequences than ever before within the limits of the dominions of the Turk. And, in short, we have seen reason enough to lead us to the settled conviction that from such a source nothing could be expected but tyrannical oppression, not only for his Christian subjects, but for all others who might have the misfortune to own his sway.

CHAPTER III.

Glimpses of Armenian life since the final overthrow of the Monarchy on to the beginning of the present century—
Persian oppression—Shah Abbas—Armenian Patriarchs
—Roman Catholic influence—Literary revival of the
eighteenth century—Summary.

FROM the overthrow of Leo VI., the last of the Rupenian dynasty, in 1375, the Armenian Monarchy ceased to exist. From that time forward even the semblance of civil autonomy disappeared. Whether, and when, it is destined to reappear, as the outcome of the present situation, is one of the questions which is still awaiting solution. The absorption of Armenia, now deprived of her kings, first by Persian and again by Turkish rulers, makes it no easy matter to trace the course of her chequered history.

There is no longer a royal centre around which the drama of the national story may revolve. The rallying point is now transferred to the Church of St. Gregory—the institution whose preservation still, apart from other considerations,

entitles the Armenian to lay claim to national unity.*

The sufferings of the Armenians during this period are largely endured in defence of their ancient Church. The record of these persecutions at the hands of their Persian and Turkish spoilers is without a parallel in the annals of martyrdom. Nowhere have we such a long continued tragedy, such multitudes of slaughtered victims—men, women, and children.

Unable to alienate them from their ancestral faith by the sword of the Prophet, the Turk resorted to those diplomatic devices, sanctioned by his religion, in which he has been long so notoriously an adept.

The Sultan Mahomet II. had, from the first, encouraged Armenian families to settle in Constantinople, and made it the residence of a new Patriarch or head of the Armenian Church. This dignitary (recalling the somewhat similar functionary known in Scottish Church history as the tulchan bishop) was called into existence for merely political and fiscal purposes, and was not owned by the orthodox Armenians as their ecclesiastical head.

The Patriarch of Etchmiadzin still remained

* Chamich, ii., part vii. Father Chamich thus opens this portion of his narrative: 'The order of our history is well connected during the time the Armenians were governed by kings or chiefs. This state being destroyed, we must consider the detail of their actions by the pontificates still permitted to exist, casting an eye at the same time to the contemporary patriarchates of Constantinople.'

the Patriarch of the Church *quoad spiritualia*. The newly-created Patriarch, however, was the only legitimate organ of communication between the Sultan and his tributary Armenian subjects.

He was, for obvious reasons, likely to be the subservient tool of his Moslem master.

The patriarchal chair, both at Constantinople and Etchmiadzin, was in the gift of the Sultan, and was sold to the highest bidder. The Patriarchs were thus often men of low, sometimes grossly scandalous, character. In the same way lower places in the Church came to be filled with hirelings.

In these circumstances one of the best of their number, the Patriarch Melchizedek (1603), made some effort at reformation. Groaning, like his predecessor who still survived, under the ruinous exactions of the Turks, he took a leading part in calling in the assistance of the Persian shah, Abbas the Great.

Abbas did indeed deliver the Armenians for a time from the oppression of his Turkish rival, but only to replace it by a still worse oppression of his own. The Persian protector of the Armenians devastated their country, turned loose upon its defenceless inhabitants his brutal soldiery, who inflicted on them all the horrors with which we are now unhappily so familiar, as the accompaniment of an Armenian massacre. The residue of the people on the scene of these atrocities was collected on the plain of Ararat, driven as so

many herds of cattle to Persia, and there settled in a suburb of Ispahan.

Twelve thousand Armenian families, and soon after other ten thousand, were thus expatriated amid barbarities such as baffle all description. Among these the massacre of the thousand refugees in the rock cavern overhanging the Valley of Gelard is ever memorable. The women, to avoid a dishonour worse than death, 'rushed to the mouth of the cavern and threw themselves on the rocks below, where they were dashed to destruction.'

Nothing more revolting can well be conceived than the passage by the exiles of the river Arax. As Abbas urged despatch in the transit, crowds of them were huddled indiscriminately into the fragile boats, and these proving insufficient, hundreds of both sexes and all ages, some sick and maimed, were thrown into the river, so that those who could swim might escape to the other side, and those who could not might drown. Many were thus abandoned to their fate, while piteously pleading for help to the last moment of sustaining themselves on the surface of the water.*

On their settlement in Persia, the conqueror treated them with more consideration. He knew their talents for business and enterprise, and hoped from this source to reap no small advantage in the future.

The Armenians henceforth, or such as remained

* Chamich, vol. ii., pp. 353-355.

in their own country, came under the sway of Persian or Turk, according to the fortunes of their frequent conflicts.

In 1655 one of the ablest of the Patriarchs, Philip, Catholicos at Etchmiadzin, was invested with office. In his time Sis yielded the supremacy to the successor of St. Gregory, and the old Church was consolidated and strengthened. This reforming Patriarch, after wisely governing the Church for twenty-two years, according to some accounts, suddenly took ill and died when preaching a sermon on the text, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' Father Chamich, who is not wont to mince his statements of the wonderful, and who assures us that Philip more than once performed miracles, does not corroborate the story of the Patriarch's so sudden demise. His account is that the preacher during his sermon had a sudden presentiment of an early death, that a few hours after leaving the pulpit he took ill, and died within eight days.

After his death, and for the next century, the Armenian Church was constantly subjected to persecution. During this period she sunk lower than she had yet done in ignorance and the vicious lives of her priesthood. The lowest point in her degradation is supposed to have been reached in the patriarchate of Lazar—one of the worst who had ever disgraced the throne of St. Gregory. He died in the year 1751.

We need not follow the not very profitable recital of the frequent changes of the patriarchate on to the close of the period under review.

We have said nothing of what may be regarded as missionary enterprise in Armenia, by any outside Church. The Church of Rome continued to make vigorous efforts, through her Jesuit missionaries and others, either to bring the Armenian Church over to herself as a whole, or, if not, to weaken it by schism. In this latter device she succeeded.

As early as the fourteenth century, Peden, a Dominican Father, had drawn away a section to the Roman Catholic see. By-and-by a new liturgy was prepared, and the Latin or Uniat Armenian Church now existed side by side with the old National Armenian Church. The Patriarch of Sis is the spiritual head under the Pope of all the Uniat Armenians in the dominions of either Turkey or Persia.

To this period belongs a movement which bears evidence to the capacity of the Armenians for culture and patriotic enterprise. This is the religious and literary revival which took place in the Uniat Armenian Church in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

An Armenian, named Mechitar, born at Sebeste, in Asia Minor, 1676, having concluded his studies for the priesthood at Etchmiadzin, went to Constantinople. There he fell in with some of the leaders of the Latin Armenian

Church. Convinced that the claims of the Pope were valid, he joined their ranks. He afterwards founded a monkish order, which came in due course to take up its abode at St. Lazarus, in Venice, in 1717.

This society became not less a literary than a religious centre of influence. The monks were united by the common bond of a vow to devote their lives to study and prayer. This Venetian society has republished Armenian classics, as well as produced many original works. Other literary centres are to be found in Vienna, Paris, Moscow, and the schools in Constantinople and Tiflis. These centres, it will be observed, are all outside of Armenia proper, unless we include Tiflis in Georgia as a part of the original Armenian dominion.

These are only a few indications of Armenian life and character in this obscure period in their history. They are, however, sufficient to show the tenacity with which they have clung to their great national institution, and thus, amid incessant changes and dispersions, preserved so largely their unity as a people.

While other nations, such as their tyrants the Turks, accepted the bloodthirsty creed of Islam without a struggle, the Armenians retained their ancient faith, and laid down their lives rather than accept the alien religion. They preferred the 'crown of martyrdom to the white turban of Mohammed.'

At the same time it has appeared, even in our

brief survey, that a process of decadence has been going on in the Old Armenian Church. This has certainly not been arrested by the zealous missionaries of the Romish propaganda. Their influence has been rather to weaken and divide than to unite and strengthen. It is clear that other influences must be brought to bear upon the old Church of St. Gregory, before she returns to her primitive position and function, when her greatest ornament was designated the Illuminator. Her hope of recovery and of noble service in the future lies in her character as a popular institution, around which cluster all the most sacred and enduring associations of long ages of martyrdom.

Her doctrinal errors are rather misconceptions of controversies which wasting persecution allowed her no time sufficiently to master, than direct perversions of the essentials of the faith. Nor does she, like the Church of Rome, mix up the teaching of Scripture with authoritative tradition, or withhold the sacred volume from the perusal of her members. Her present decadent position is suggestively connected with centuries of enjoyment of Turkish toleration. During that time this principle has been in active operation. The Turk has massacred without compunction those who would not embrace his creed. But he has spared the greater portion alive, knowing how useful they might be in raising enormous taxes, and how completely it was in his power to make existence for them a prolonged misery. The Turk

in his magnanimity, has always preferred a slow to a sudden death.

Meantime, no sooner does the Armenian breathe a little of the air of genuine liberty, even in the most questionable companionship, than the native spirit once more revives with those aspirations and activities which shed their undying glory on the eras of St. Gregory, Tiridates, St. Isaac, and St. Miesrop. The intellectual awakening of the eighteenth century, though rather outside than inside the bounds of the mother-Church, is at once a pleasing memory of the past, and, let us hope, a happy omen of the future.

CHAPTER IV.

Political situation in Turkey towards the close of the last, and during the first half of the present, century—Degeneracy of the Turk—Russian advances—Peter the Great—Traditional policy of Russia—Reforming Sultans.

THE Turkish Empire had reached the zenith of its power in the reign of Solymán the Magnificent—the contemporary of Charles V., Francis I., and Henry VIII. Since this date the process of decline has been at work. The symptoms of its fatal progress became gradually more apparent, until at length they arrested the attention of Europe in the defeat at Vienna, 1683, which shattered beyond recovery the strength of her land forces, as that of Lepanto had done the strength of her naval power more than a century before. Since the later crisis, Turkey has been sensibly and steadily retrograding as the other Powers, whose very existence she had at one time menaced, have been not less steadily advancing. Some of the causes, internal and external, may well arrest the attention of the student of history.

When wars and conquest were the objects of Turkish ambition, the creed of Islam added the sanction of religion to the grossest indulgence of all his strongest, most cherished native propensities. It had no corresponding inspiration for its rude warrior, when he assumed the rôle of a despotic ruler of his vanquished subjects.

Meantime, in the hands of the non-progressive Turk, even war began to lose something of its terrors for the advancing civilization of Europe. Among the nations of Europe science was remodelling the old, and devising new and vastly more effective, methods of warfare. It was strengthening their fortresses against the vigorous onslaughts of the barbarian, and providing departments of aggressive assault in new contrivances of artillery, which impressed their astonished antagonists with a sense of the miraculous. Considerable as their own primitive attainments had been in this their only school of education, they did not equip them for these higher studies.

In this state of stagnation or retrogression of the Turkish warrior, medicine was launching its beneficent mission to the camp and the battlefield of his adversary. Considerate attention to the wants of a military force, as to quarters and provision, resulting in a reconstruction of the commissariat, was improving on all hands the efficiency of the soldier. Above all, a tendency to cohesion and patriotism was making its ap-

pearance among the quasi-independent provinces where the paramount government was conducted on principles of equity and humanity.

In these circumstances the Turk lost for ever his one golden opportunity, and has now for the last two centuries and upwards been relapsing into a darker Tartarus than that from which he originally sprung. Another cause of the internal decline of Turkish prestige is the quite startling physical degeneracy, the outcome of the moral ulcer of Islamism, as embodied in its sensual character, and so mournfully apparent in Mahomet himself in his closing years at Medina. This is bringing about by the operation of a natural law a rapid decrease of the Turkish race. It has been estimated that within fifty years of the present century the Turkish population of Europe has dwindled from 2,700,000 to 1,150,000. But we turn now to the external influence or influences which have been also at work in hastening the process of dissolution. Chief of these is Russia.

The relation of Turkey to Russia, and the encroachments of the latter upon her dominions and prestige, must therefore for a little engage our attention. Russia, towards the close of the tenth century, so far emerged from her primitive barbarism as to embrace the Christian religion. Her choice of a national faith was conducted on the eclectic principle as the result to some extent of inquiries into existing religious systems. The Greek Church was fixed

upon in preference to other rivals for political reasons, and reasons personal to the first royal convert. The Emperor Vladimir, the first to embrace the new faith, was about to ally himself to the reigning sovereign at Constantinople by a marriage with his sister Anne. One of the stipulations was his conversion to Christianity. From this point the supremacy of the Greek Church was recognised in Russia.

Thus had come into existence a slowly rising power to the north of Constantinople, which was yet destined to castigate the Moslem tyrant, whose boast it was that he had erected the standard of the Crescent on the ruins of the Christian dominion of the East. The vanquished religion, corrupt as in many respects it had become, at length reappeared as the fostering, guiding spirit of the new political power, whose advances were to shape into form, and to enter so largely into the solution of, what has now been so long known as the Eastern Question.

The main steps of the Russian advance are these: With the accession of Peter the Great (1689) a new era had commenced in the destiny and place of Russia among the European powers.

Before this time Russia had not a single port on the Baltic; her only commercial emporium was at Archangel. But the new Czar at once set himself to lay the foundations of a great and lasting empire. His visit to England in the

reign of William III., his enthusiasm in the ship-building yards and demeanour at Whitehall, excited the curiosity and wonder of the courtly and fashionable circles in London and elsewhere. 'His stately form,' says Macaulay, 'his intellectual forehead, his piercing black eyes, his Tartar nose and mouth, his gracious smile, his frown, black with all the stormy rage and hate of a barbarian tyrant, and, above all, a strange nervous convulsion which sometimes transformed his countenance during a few moments into an object on which it was impossible to look without terror; the immense quantities of meat which he devoured, the pints of brandy which he swallowed, and which it was said he had carefully distilled with his own hands, the fool who jabbered at his feet, the monkey which grinned at the back of his chair, were during some weeks popular topics of conversation.'

In carrying out the programme he had laid down for the formation of a new Russia, Peter the Great took the first aggressive step towards hostilities with the Turkish Empire. In 1696 he gained a decisive victory over the Sultan, Mustapha II., and took from him the port of Azof, thus opening up the Black Sea to the Russian fleet. Three years later Turkey was compelled by the Treaty of Carlowitz to renounce her claims upon Transylvania, and the country between the Danube and the Theiss.

In 1730, in the reign of the Empress Anne, some other triumphs were gained over the Porte. The most formidable, however, of all the Russian foes of Turkey was the sovereign who most fully realized the ideal of Peter the Great, Catherine II. (1762-1774). Not only did she carry on successful wars against the Sultan, but she projected, consistently advocated, and, so far as she could, gave practical effect to a definite scheme to expel the Turk from Europe, and re-establish the Byzantine Empire. This project she prosecuted to her last breath, bequeathing it as a legacy to her successors. Russian aggression therefore steadily continued until, in 1802, the Emperor Alexander annexed Georgia. Further progress was delayed for a time by the meteoric transit of Napoleon across the path of Russian policy. When Napoleon was finally defeated at Waterloo, Russia found herself in possession of a considerable portion of Turkish Armenia. By the peace of Tiflis, in 1813, she gained all the territory west of the Caspian Sea between the Kur and the Arax, Georgia having been already annexed.

The Turks had all along suspected Russia of favouring the insurrection which had lost her Greece in 1822. On the re-enslavement of that noble race, Russia once more moves forward, and the naval victory of Tchesme, in the time of Catherine, with the further concessions of the peace of 1774, are crowned by the decisive engagement at Navarino (1827), and the peace

of Adrianople, which at last fully secured the emancipation of the Greeks.

In 1828 war was again declared by Russia against Turkey, and over and above other successes in Europe, the Russian general Paskiewitch took by storm the fortress of Kars, the central point of Turkish Armenia, and finally conquered the whole pachalic of Bagazid as far as the Euphrates. In 1829 Paskiewitch continued his victorious course, and took possession of Erzeroum, the centre of Asiatic Turkey.

Peace was then concluded, and Russia was pleased, for reasons satisfactory to herself, to spare the political existence of her adversary. The chief reason was indeed subsequently stated by a Russian authority to be that the Czar considered he could best advance his own interests by a protectorate over an enfeebled Ottoman Empire. The Sultan then solemnly engaged, as he has so often done, to give religious freedom to all his subjects.

Russia now remained for a season inactive. But the fondly cherished project of Catherine II., if at times somewhat modified, and again and again verbally repudiated, was still, in its spirit, the guiding principle of Russian policy. Turkey must remain, if a power at all, a merely nominal power. To enable Russia to dominate the Black Sea, and establish in due time her coveted protectorate over Turkey, the strong fortress of Sebastopol was erected in the Crimea, and a

powerful Russian fleet now occupied the waters of the Euxine.

Thus the encroachments of Russia upon Turkey were part of a settled policy, either for the complete overthrow or the depletion of the Ottoman prestige.

Always protesting that she wished no more accessions to her already too vast dominions, Russia went on extending her boundaries into Turkey, both in Europe and Asia.*

The desire of Russia to advance to Constantinople has for long ages been more than an open secret. The Emperor Nicholas, who personally disclaimed it, declared that you might as soon arrest the rushing stream in its headlong descent from the mountain source as arrest the course of this national sentiment.

An old-world prophecy, engraven centuries ago on an equestrian statue, foretold the final victory of the Slav, and his triumphant entry into Constantinople.

In Turkey itself the presentiment had been meantime gathering strength, that unless something were done the Ottoman Empire was hopelessly doomed. The old system of *laissez faire*,

* The Russian policy has been thus characterized by their own historian Karamsin: 'The object and the character of our military policy has invariably been to seek to be at peace with everybody, and to make conquests without war; always keeping ourselves on the defensive, placing no faith in the friendship of those whose interests do not accord with our own, and losing no opportunity of injuring them without breaking our treaties with them.'

it was seen, must be exchanged for one of vigorous action, inspired by the instinct of self-preservation. Such was the state of things in Turkey towards the close of the last century.

The emergency called forth a series of actively reforming Sultans who, for a season, did much to arrest the downward course. Selim III. (1789-1807) was the first of this new order of Sultans. He set about internal reforms, favoured commerce and culture, and made some attempts to reorganize the military system, or, in other words, to suppress the Janissaries, and substitute an army modelled on the civilization of Europe.

This was the proverbial last straw: the Janissaries rose in rebellion and deposed their sovereign. The same fate overtook his successor, Mustapha II., whose reforms and reign together extended only over the space of a year.

The ablest and most successful of the reforming Sultans was Mahmoud II. (1808-1839), who during his long reign, did much to consolidate the Ottoman Empire and give it a new lease of existence. Mahmoud abolished the old Turkish aristocracy, and made the Sultan the *fons et origo* of all rank and distinction within the empire, interesting himself in the welfare of all races and creeds of his people, and was even ostentatiously liberal towards his non-Moslem subjects.

He was at the same time a merciless tyrant, resorting to the coarse methods of Islam for the advancement of his most beneficent measures.

Blood flowed along his path like water. His destruction of the Janissaries was a display of barbarism only conceivable, as to its grim accessories, by the pagan despot. The hapless victims were driven into an enclosure which could be overlooked by the exulting Sultan and his minions. They were then slaughtered in cold blood, man by man, the Sultan gloating over the scene as some debauched old Roman tyrant may be supposed to have luxuriated over a scene of bloodshed in the amphitheatre.

His attention was in due course distracted from these orgies by the aggressive movements of his Northern foe. His war with Russia cost him Bessarabia and part of Moldavia. The Greek revolution, to which we have already referred, further seriously curtailed his European dominions.

Abdul Mejid (1839-1861) pursued the same general policy, but amid growing opposition. The Crimean war occurred in his reign, and gave rise to a new departure in the treatment of the Eastern Question. So closes this period in the history of Turkey. The degeneracy and misrule of ages had alienated her subjects and laid her open to Russian intrigue and Russian conquest. The advances of Russia, under the banner of the Cross, however unworthily borne, were to some extent a boon, for the time being, to the oppressed Christians of Armenia.

The annexation of Georgia and other Armenian

reforms brought a measure of relief to those Christians who had so long been outraged by the Moslem tyranny of both Persian and Turk.

The reforms at the Divan were late in the day—too late. They were utterly alien to the Moslem spirit, and could not by any possibility be of long continuance. They ran a brief and troubled course towards the close of the last and the first half of this century, but are now as entirely a thing of the past as the early conquests of the Turkish Caliphs of Constantinople, and the prestige itself of the old Ottoman Empire.

CHAPTER V.

New phases of the Armenian Question—Gradual change of policy of the reforming Turk—Protestant influence—American missions—Conflicting verdicts—Political reforms reviewed—Treaty of Adrianople, 1829—Hatti Sherif, 1839—Protestant Charter, 1850—Hatti Humayoun in view of prospective demands of the Treaty of Paris—Summary.

THE Turkish reforms may be said to have reached their climax ere the close of the long and vigorous reign of Mahmoud II. (1808-1839).

During this period many abuses were apparently terminated and many beneficial changes introduced into the military and civil affairs of the empire. The Sultan made considerable progress in liberalizing the old despotism, in the promotion of education, industry, commerce, and in certain measures of religious freedom. His son, Abdul Mejid, as we have already seen, continued these reforms, but with far less efficiency and success. He was harassed, as his predecessor had so long been, by the persistent rebellion of his Egyptian viceroy, Mehemet Ali, whom it required the assistance of the English

fleet, under Admiral Stopford and Sir Charles Napier, to compel to restore the provinces of Syria to the Sultan. His attention was also distracted by increasing complications with Russia and their outcome in the Crimean war. His reforms were opposed with growing obstinacy by a revival of the old conservative spirit, and especially as they seemed to aim at religious toleration for the non-Moslem. The truth was that the era of reform at Yildiz Palace had already closed. New forces were coming into play which were to dissipate the still lingering reforming fancies of the Sultans, and to throw them back upon the resources of the old despotic methods of government. A degenerating race of sovereigns, the secret slaves of lust and intemperance, could not long maintain a policy based on the confidence of the people, even of their Moslem subjects.

The religious and political reforms of the Sultans had never been anything else than merely precarious and temporary expedients to avert a visibly approaching doom. Even when the Grand Turk was in some degree sincere, he was easily duped by his pashas, who were his agents in the provinces, and they again, when well disposed, were usually too indolent and careless to check the lawless ferocity of their subordinates. This statement is abundantly confirmed by travellers and others, who now and then, during this period of ostentatious reformation at the

Divan, got an occasional glimpse behind the scenes of what was ever in reality a woeful tragedy. We shall give a single illustrative instance. It is related at length by the Hon. Robert Curzon, in his 'Armenia,' under the heading 'Case of Artin, Odi Bashi, an Armenian, 1843.'

A charge of theft had been brought against a chamberlain of a khan or inn in the vilayet of Erzeroum. The accused was an Armenian Christian, and the only evidence that of two soldiers, who had confessed to having themselves stolen one half of the goods, the property of a Moslem merchant. They averred that the Armenian, Odi Bashi, had stolen the other half.

The accusation and tortures of the Armenian are described as detailed by the wife of the victim. In order to make him confess the theft, the kiaya ordered him to be put to the torture. A cup of hot brass was put upon his head, two sheep's knuckle-bones were placed upon his temples, and cords were tightened till his eyes nearly came out. As he would not confess, his front-teeth were then drawn one at a time; pieces of cane were run up under his toe-nails.

Such was the deposition of the wife of the accused, who begged Mr. Curzon to interpose to save her husband from further barbarities. She declared that he slept at home on the night of the robbery.

When the victim was released and examined,

he said he had been tortured, as had been at last admitted by the kiaya, though at first denied. He stated that this was done by the order of his judge, that the bones were put to his temples, some of his teeth were drawn, his nails pierced, his left thigh torn with pincers, he was hung up by the arms by ropes, but the hot cup was not placed upon his head.

Mr. Curzon assures us that on his bringing the matter personally under the notice of the pasha, he found that dignitary deceived by the false reports of his subordinate, and that he did not know that any tortures had been inflicted. He adds: 'From the above account it appears that much injustice may be carried on by the inferior officers of the Government, which never gets to the ear of the pasha, small officials being notoriously more tyrannical than greater men.'

If such incidents were the warp and woof of everyday life in the provinces when the Turk was at his best as a constitutional ruler, we can form some dim conception of what existence must have been for the hapless Armenian in normal times, when the Turk is at his worst.

A new era, however, did begin to dawn on the Armenian, not as the result of reforms at the Divan, or of his pashas in the provinces, but of reforms from a very different source. This was the influence of Protestant missionary enterprise among the Armenians. The authoritative account of the origin of the chief of these agencies,

the American Mission, is to be found in 'Missionary Researches in Armenia,' by Smith and Dwight, 1834. The experiences of the first missionary are related in 'Forty Years in the Turkish Empire: Memorials of the Rev. William Goodell, D.D.,' 1876.

While there are other agencies at work, the American missionaries easily take a foremost place. They have proved the pioneers of civilization in Asiatic Turkey. Nothing has tempted them to desert the post of duty in the times of greatest trial and peril. Their sympathy with the suffering, their wise counsel, their Christian heroism, are well known and beyond all praise. Their labours are carried on under the control of the American Congregational and Presbyterian Boards. The Congregational is the stronger of the two wings of this salvation army, and at the present rudimentary stage it would be no easy matter to organize a Church upon Presbyterian lines. The centres of presbyteries, synods, and assemblies would present geographical difficulties not experienced in the working of Congregationalism. The direct results are in the highest degree creditable to the missionaries, especially when the opposition they have had to encounter is taken into account. The indirect results are the awakening of a spirit of inquiry, and the inauguration of a forward movement among the Armenians chiefly, and in some degree among others who have come under the influence of the missionaries.

The best proof of the elevating influence of their educational work is found in the new-born zeal of the present Sultan for the establishment of schools, on behalf of his Moslem subjects, and his hostility to the missionary institutions.

That the American missionary has entered Armenia as the harbinger of an era of progress for its down-trodden people is now pretty generally admitted. We may certainly trace to this source all the more recent progressive movements of that community.

The religious revival has, as usual, been followed by a revival of the spirit of individual and political freedom.

The Turk cannot relish these tendencies, and yet the present Sultan has been forced to own that the missionaries are free from any sinister political designs.

There have been critics of Protestant missions, and therefore, of course, American missions, who have not been so equitable in their judgment as the Sultan. They have spoken of them as having no fixed creed, as so many warring sects, whose chief achievement has been to produce a barbarous translation of the Scriptures, which is the subject of ridicule and contempt to all cultured Armenians.

These, however, are now obsolete verdicts. There has been a steadily-growing appreciation of the influence for good of the American missions.

Quite recently a strong light has been cast on this subject in a pathetic letter from Armenia, published by Sir William Muir, and entitled 'Armenia's Farewell' (January, 1896).

Sir W. Muir says, by way of introduction to this 'genuine wail of the horror-stricken people,' that since the fourteenth century, when Leo VI., the last of the Armenian kings, was taken captive and the dynasty overthrown, there has been no such attempt as is now being made to exterminate the Armenian race or convert them to Islam. The following is an extract containing the closing portion of the above-mentioned letter:

'TO THE CHRISTIANS OF AMERICA.

'Although we have cherished strong prejudices against your mission work among us, recent events have proved that our Protestant brethren are with us, and have shared fully our anxieties and our perils. This has brought us very near to you, and, if there were any future for us, we should prize your Christian love and fellowship as never before; but we are marked for destruction, and can only bid you farewell. You have laboured to promote among us the peace and prosperity of the Gospel. It is not your fault that one result of your teaching and example has been to excite our masters against us. You, at least, know the situation too well to believe for a moment that we are being punished for political sins. You cannot fail to see that, so far as we have been the occa-

sion of the bloody massacres which have come upon us, our crime in the eyes of the Turk has been that we have so fully accepted, and so far adopted, the Christian civilization of the West. You are quite aware that the Turkish Government dreads and dislikes nothing so much as the ideas of progress which you have brought us. Behold the missions which you have planted and maintained among us at the cost of many millions of dollars, and hundreds of precious lives. They are in ruins; and not only this, the Turk is planning to rid himself of the missionaries by leaving nobody among and for whom to work. A short year ago, and nobody could have believed that at the end of this nineteenth century—a century characterized by the collapse of Islam and the advance of Christianity to a position of unquestioned supremacy in the government of the world—a Christian people could, on account of their loyalty to Christian civilization, and under the very eyes of Christendom, be exterminated by a Mohammedan power. Yet just this fearful tragedy is being consummated to-day. Already hundreds of Armenian villages have been wiped out, and in the larger towns and cities our people have been decimated, plundered, crushed. We see no signs of relenting on the part of our destroyers, and no hand is reached out to rescue us. We have only to say farewell to any who have loved and cared for us, and prepare ourselves for the butcher's knife, honoured in closing

and sealing our national history of forty centuries with our blood.'

We turn now for a little to trace the general course of those political reforms, emanating in the first place, as we have already stated, from the constitutional Sultans, and which, no doubt contrary to the design of their authors, were as the letting out of the waters of the rising tide, which threatens at no distant date to submerge the throne of the Turkish Empire.

First, we have the Russian autocrat suggesting a larger measure of freedom to his co-religionists, especially the members of the Greek rather than the Armenian Church. This was promised by Mahmoud II. (the greatest of the reforming Sultans) in terms of the Treaty of Adrianople, 1829.

The characteristic diplomatic system of profuse royal promises embodied in magniloquent firmans was now a recognised policy of Ottoman rule.

Abdul Mejid, Mahmoud's son and successor, issued, in 1839, an imperial rescript, the Hatti Sherif, engaging to protect the life and property of all his subjects, whatever their race or religion. In 1844 he gave a solemn pledge that no apostate from Islamism, who had formerly been a Christian, should be put to death. Still further, this same Sultan granted in 1850 what is known as the Protestant Charter. The Charter concedes

the fullest measure of religious freedom. Lastly, Abdul Mejid, just before the Treaty of Paris had been completed, in 1856, issued the imperial edict, the Hatti Humayoun, which guarantees perfect equality of civil rights to all the subjects of the Porte, as also the largest conceivable degree of toleration, in these words: 'As all forms of religion are, and shall be, freely professed in my dominions, no subject of my empire shall be hindered in the exercise of the religion that he professes, nor shall he in any way be annoyed on this account.'

These fair promises were none of them kept. The same iron yoke of oppression rested on the necks of the Christian populations of the empire, and especially the Asiatic portion, though this has been the last to arouse the practical sympathy of Europe.

The burden of oppression fell chiefly on Christian Armenia. While Georgia afforded a safe civil asylum to the Armenians under Russian rule, and Persia even was a place of refuge, Turkish Armenia was only entering on a new and sure heritage of indescribable suffering and degradation. Such was the state of things when Russia stepped in with her ultimatum claiming a protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, and this as the fulfilment of a pledge already given to the Czar.

We have thus seen that the policy of the Turkish Sultans gradually reverted to the ideal of the old

despotism. Any sincerity of purpose which may have existed when reform seemed the sheet-anchor of political stability had gradually given way to the native habit of mind. Meantime, in this way, an impulse had been given to a new state of things. The spirit of reform was now astir.

We have glanced at the fostering influence of the American missionaries. The stage of misrepresentation, we have said, is past, and the hope may well be indulged that this agency, with its Robert College at Constantinople, and other educational institutions sending forth its pioneers in the Crusade of the nineteenth century, has yet many triumphs before it in the prospective regeneration of Armenia and the other Asiatic portions of the Turkish Empire.

We have also noted retrospectively, and up to the new departure in 1856, the trend of political reform in Turkey under Russian pressure, and in the shape of certain pledges given with truly Oriental profusion by the reigning Sultan. Connected with the Russian idea of world-wide conquest, we ought to add, is that of the co-ordinate extension of the influence of the Greek Church.

The Greek Church aspires, as far as possible, to advance *pari passu* with these conquests. That Church, long at variance with the Latin on questions of relative superiority, was at last formally excommunicated and anathematized 'by

the Roman See, on account of having embraced the heresy that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father, and not also from the Son.'

The 'Filioque' Shibboleth, it has been well said, has ever since divided the Eastern from the Western Churches, even more completely than the Bosphorus divides Asia from Europe.

The alliance between the Church and State in Russia is of the closest kind. The Erastian problem was promptly solved one day by the sudden entrance of Peter the Great into the conclave of bishops, about to elect a new Patriarch, with the announcement that he himself was henceforth to be their Patriarch. With such an authority, argument was out of the question, and from this time forward the Russian Czar has been recognised as the Head of the Greek Church.

There can be no doubt that the strong feeling of jealousy between the Greek and Latin Churches, giving rise to the petty squabble about the custody of the keys of certain holy places in and around Jerusalem, and ending in unpardonable humiliation for the Czar, was the real cause which precipitated the Crimean war, from which we date a new and important phase in the relations of the Powers of Europe to Turkish misrule in both the Eastern and Western divisions of her empire.

CHAPTER VI.

European concert and its relation to Turkey—Treaty of Paris, 1856 — Turkish diplomacy— Young Armenia— National Constitution (1862) and National Commission (1871) — Situation before the Treaty of San Stefano— Cyprus Convention and Treaty of Berlin (1878)—Sixty-first and Sixty-second Articles—Peace with Honour—Summary.

WITH the events which ushered in the Congress and Treaty of Paris was inaugurated on a European scale the subsequent continuous policy of the Christian Powers towards the Turkish Empire.

Three centuries or so before this date the dream, it has been said, of every statesman in Europe was the expulsion of the Turk from Constantinople, and the emancipation of Christian Europe from the oppression of the infidel. At the period to which we now refer, the close of the Crimean War, we find the six great Powers of Europe resorting to every expedient of diplomacy, not stopping short of remedial measures of coercion to retain the Turk on the throne which he had so long disgraced, and which was now tottering visibly to its fall.

The reason of this change of policy is worthy of some attention, and brings us back again to note the aggressive movements of that Power which had for so long been fraught with the kismet of the foredoomed Moslem. That Power, of course, is Russia.

Ever since the brilliant victories of Catherine II. a feeling had been gaining strength in the cabinets of Europe that the sword of the Czar was at the throat of the Sultan, and that the fatal stroke would fall at the earliest moment when it could be delivered with impunity. The instinct of self-preservation, in a lesser degree that of sympathy with the distress of the conscious victim, and above all a regard for the public weal of Europe, combined to bring into prominence the doctrine of political expediency, known as 'the balance of power.'

Should Russia plant the banner of the Cross on the Mosque of St. Sophia, this already overshadowing Colossus would, it was believed, endanger the liberties of Europe. Great Britain in particular saw in this possible event a menace to her prestige in the East. Other European Powers nearer Constantinople saw cause for uneasiness in the prospect of the new régime. The vision of a motley throng of Ural Cossacks mustering on the shores of the Bosphorus for an incursion into the plains of Europe had terrors enough in it to disturb the most sober imagination. Even in England it was long remembered

that one of the chiefs of these Frankensteins of Russian power had, shortly after the battle of Waterloo, nudged Field-Marshal Blücher as they passed along the London streets, and exclaimed: 'What a city for to shack!'

The theory, therefore, was that the maintenance of the Turkish despot was necessary to preserve the balance of power, and so far guarantee the peace of the nations of Europe. To this strange theory Turkey has since then owed, not only its existence as an empire, but a recognised place in the concert of Europe, as well as all the power she has since so grossly abused in the misrule and massacre of her non-Moslem subjects.

But to return to our survey of the course of events. We shall now see how this theory has been elevated into an international principle, and carried into practice in the provisions of the treaty which followed the Crimean War, and the issue of the Hatti Humayoun, *i.e.*, the Treaty of Paris.

The Crimean War arose ostensibly from the rejection by the Sultan Abdul Mejid of the ultimatum presented by Prince Menschikoff on behalf of Russia. In it the Czar claimed a virtual protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Sublime Porte, or three-fourths of the population of Turkey. This was not advanced by him as a new claim, but as a right which had been conceded in terms of the treaty of 1744. This construction of the treaty was denied by Turkey and her allies.

More strictly, the claim had reference to the members of the Greek Church, yet could be so construed as to embrace the whole Christian population.

The European Powers supported the Sultan in his rejection of the Russian ultimatum, and England and France sent their allied forces to the Crimea. On the conclusion of the war, and a new firman from the Sultan (Hatti Humayoun) granting religious freedom to his subjects, the Treaty of Paris, incorporating this firman, was drawn up as an international guarantee for the execution of these reforms. The Crimean War having been undertaken to arrest the steady encroachments of Russia, and to secure new guarantees for the independence of the Ottoman Empire, one provision of the treaty was that Russia should withdraw her claim to a protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Sultan.

The responsibility of protecting the Christians of Turkey from Moslem outrage thus devolved, by their own act, upon the European Powers. Russia was thrust out of Turkey, and the Sultan no longer needed to dread her control. Not only was Russia deprived of some of her land conquests over Turkish territory, but her naval strength on the Black Sea was destroyed, and she was bound by the treaty not to restore it.

The text of Article IX. of the Treaty of Paris, which is designed to remove the pretext for

Russian interference, runs thus: 'His Imperial Majesty the Sultan having, in his constant solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, issued a firman which, while ameliorating their condition without distinction of religion or of race, records his generous intentions towards the Christian population of his empire, and wishing to give a further proof of his sentiments in this respect, has resolved to communicate to the contracting parties the said firman emanating spontaneously from his sovereign will. The contracting Powers recognise the high value of this communication. It is clearly understood that it cannot in any case give to the said Powers the right to interfere, either collectively or separately, in the relations of his Majesty the Sultan with his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his empire.'

The remedy for all complaints in the government of Turkey, when they can be no longer ignored, is an imperial Hatti promising immediate and superabundant redress, and granting all imaginable reforms. These engagements being made under physical constraint, and only to the infidel, are not seriously meant, and remain, so far as the spontaneous action of the sovereign will is concerned, a dead letter. This has been notoriously the case as to the engagements undertaken through the treaty we are now considering.

There are, it is said, three phases of Turkish diplomacy. There is first the open defiance of the Powers insisting on faithful performance of

stipulated compacts, when this can be resorted to with impunity. When this attitude cannot be assumed, there is the second phase, which is an assurance of compliance with the demand, given with all the solemnity of a devout Moslem. No semblance even of performance is ever attempted. In the third and most desperate stage, from the Moslem point of view, along with the solemn pledge there is some deceptive appearance of performance.

So far was Turkey from intending to carry out the reforms of the Treaty of Paris that from that time there commences a new era of oppression. In Armenia, however, a forward movement seemed to have begun. The idea of religious freedom came upon the Armenians as an inspiration. Their religion, for which they had endured so many persecutions, was the one thing the Turk had not taken or could not take from them. Their hopes of a future centred in guarding this sacred trust. It was the Palladium of their beleaguered land, and so long as it remained with them they were safe. The promised liberty now guaranteed by the European concert awakened a new life inside and around the long-desolated shrines of their martyred forefathers.

The Turk, lynx-eyed as to the detection of any movement of emancipation, and resolved to crush it at the outset, soon took note of the new birth of what we may name the party of Young Armenia.

This party was in earnest about reform, and reform on such constitutional lines as were now opened up by the Hatti Humayoun, and the Paris Treaty, which, by placing it as the first of its articles, gave it the emphatic sanction of the Powers of Europe. The party, in striving to have these reforms carried out, was acting on strictly constitutional lines, and in a spirit of loyalty to the Ottoman Government. Nothing is more discreditable to the Turk than his hypocritical attitude towards these revived aspirations of his Armenian subjects.

While anxiously waiting for some indication of the practical results of the treaty pledges, they discovered that the Sultan under the sanction of the treaty provision, was initiating his reforms by an alleged necessary restriction of such limited independence as had originated and been fostered in the bosom of the mother-Church.

They not only had the courage to protest against this insidious attack on their liberties, but to insist on some personal share in the administration of their affairs.

The Sultan, 'in his constant solicitude for the welfare of his subjects,' on hearing a representation of the grievances complained of, met the advances of Young Armenia by the magnanimous offer of a brand-new National Armenian Constitution (1862).

This paper constitution is a complicated piece of radical legislation, made up of 150 provisions, which, if really brought into operation, would

have converted Armenia into a political paradise. We need not enumerate its lofty sentiments, its educational and religious reforms, its profuse and cordial encomiums of the Turkish ruler. Never was there a more imposing catalogue of high-sounding promises.

A full account of this wonderful Magna Charta of Armenian freedom is given by M. G. Rolin Jæquemyns, in his articles in the *International Law Review* (1888-9), to which we refer the reader.

Five years passed, and as no real advance had been made to serious action, it was resolved by the National Assembly, which had now a nominal existence, to appoint a National Commission to inquire into unredressed grievances and to suggest remedies. This Commission was appointed in 1871, under the presidency of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Almost the only good service the Armenian Constitution had done was to provide a channel through which the Sultan might be approached by the Armenians, with their legitimate complaints and appeals for reform. These cries of distress were now being heard from all quarters, and even if they fell, as they did, on deaf ears in the kiosk of the Sultan, there were others prepared to listen. The Patriarch of Constantinople drew up the first report of the National Commission (with its black list of grievances of oppression in taxation, forced conversions of women and minors to Islamism, Turkish and

Kurdish outrages on women and children), submitted it to the Grand Vizier, Mahmoud-Nedim-Pasha, in 1872, and again on several occasions to his successors.

After four years' hopeless waiting for a response, a second report was submitted, calling attention to new abuses. These arose from the brutal lust of the Turkish officials, and the iniquitous proceedings of the law-courts in which such cases were tried, and where the decision invariably was on the side of the Moslem and his accomplices. The report enters into minute details of instances, as the Sultan had declared that no attention could be paid to general charges. The list of lands wrongfully appropriated by their spoilers from the Armenians, with the names of the culprits, covers ten pages of the report.

It would be impossible within our narrow limits to analyze the contents of this terrible indictment of Turkish misrule. During all these outrages, it must be remembered that Moslem Sacred Law forbids to the infidel the use of arms even in self-defence, while it fully equips every chance marauder who can be pressed into the service of their oppression. Even to some of our English statesmen this policy has seemed defensible. When the other Powers of Europe, in the Berlin Memorandum, proposed to demand the fulfilment of the Sultan's treaty engagement to permit the Christians the use of arms, Lord Derby opposed them on the singular pretext that,

should the Christians be armed, 'a collision would be inevitable'! When the other Powers pressed his obligation on the Sultan, he, of course, had no difficulty in evading his promise by securing a decision from the Sheik-ul-Islam (the supreme authority in the Sacred Law), in consultation with the Ulema of Constantinople, that such a concession was *ultra vires* even of the Sultan, who cannot alter a single iota of the Sacred Law. In short, the first obstacle to all Governmental reforms in Turkey is just this Sacred Law. The Turkish Government is a Moslem theocracy, and cannot be altered in principle, being already a final expression of the will of Allah. The Koran, with the traditions founded on it, rules supreme. Its spirit is not only hostility, but the most degrading bondage or death to the infidel.

Canon MacColl, in his 'England's Responsibility towards Armenia' (1895),* mentions four outstanding grievances of this rule of Islam or theocratic system, all of which mean untold sorrow and humiliation to the Armenian, above any other subject of Turkey. These grievances are, the exclusion from rights of citizenship, the rejection of Christian evidence in law-courts as against a Mohammedan, the prohibition above referred to, of arms to a Christian, and what is known as the law of the Hospitality Tax.

* Every reader will endorse the judgment of the Duke of Westminster on this pamphlet, that a more authoritative or clearer demonstration of Turkish misrule could hardly be drawn up.

As regards the stringency of the law respecting Christian evidence, the Rev. Dr. Wright, head of the Irish Presbyterian Mission at Damascus, says: 'I was present in the Supreme Court of Justice at Damascus when the evidence of her Britannic Majesty's Consul was refused by the judge, because he was a Christian, and the evidence of his Moslem stable-boy taken instead.'

Commenting on the Hospitality Tax, according to which every Christian subject of the Sultan is bound to provide three days' gratuitous hospitality for every Mohammedan traveller who chooses to demand it, Canon MacColl gives the following extract from a description of Mr. Nassau Senior (1860). It is not so much a picture of any scene of the periodically recurring massacres, as of the everyday life of the Christian rayah under the tyranny of this one sacred law of hospitality.

'Besides the wholesale robbery of the great Turks, there is,' he says, 'the petty oppression of the little Turks. One of them, with his belt full of pistols, walks up to a rayah's house. He calls out the master, who perhaps is the headman of the village, and bids him hold his horse. He walks in, sits down, and makes the women light his pipe. The girls all run away and hide in the outhouses, or among the neighbours. When he has finished his pipe, he asks for a fowl. He is told there is none. A few blows bring one out; a few more bread and wine. What is the source of this insolence? That he is armed, and that he

is the only person in the village who is. If the rayahs were armed or the Turks were disarmed, there would be none of this petty oppression.'

These oppressions are not confined to this or that province. The Central Government from time to time issues an irade condemning glaring cases, but little or any notice is taken or meant to be taken by the provincial pasha. And so the tragedy, treaty or no treaty, goes on, and Young Armenia is destined to see its dream of a brightening future changing into a horrible nightmare.

As regards the cause of reform generally, not only in Armenia, but throughout the Turkish Empire, this was from the first enfeebled by the omission from the Treaty of Paris of the substance of the Hatti Humayoun, as a formal provision, and the substitution in its place of the notification of the good intentions of the Sultan, 'emanating spontaneously from his own sovereign will.' This diplomatic phraseology was adopted on the representation of the chief Turkish plenipotentiary, Ali Pasha, as a necessary avowal to preserve the dignity and to secure the success of the reforming measures of the Sultan. Ali Pasha was at that time Grand Vizier of Turkey, and amid the many changes of the vizierate of the next fifteen years of his life, his influence was thrown into the scale of keeping up an appearance of reform, and a reality of incessant parade of the independence of the Sultan.

The European Powers, crediting, it would seem,

the Turkish Government with a measure of good faith, were content to be merely onlookers as the terrible tragedy proceeded.

Meantime the successor of Ali Pasha, as the real guide of Turkish policy—Mahmoud Nedim Pasha (to whom we have already said the Patriarch of Constantinople submitted the first report of the Armenian Commission), threw off the too transparent mask. He adopted the popular rallying cry of 'Turkey for the Turks,' and at the same time the principle that Western measures of reform were unfitted for the habits of an Oriental empire. There was henceforth no pretence to adapt Turkish administration to European notions of justice and humanity. This stubborn attitude made the reopening of the Eastern Question merely a matter of time and a fitting opportunity.

The occasion was given (July, 1875) in the insurrection of Herzegovina. The chief grievance was over-taxation and oppression, in defiance of the Hatti Humayoun. The revolt was one of those occurrences in the history of an oppressed people which prove so disastrous in failure, yet when successful raise their instigators to the rank of heroes and patriots. This movement led the European Powers at last to take some overt united action, and the presentation of the Andrassy note—demanding certain reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina—was the practical outcome. The astute Nedim Pasha tried the proverbial ten tricks of the fox to avert the issue, but only with

reynard's proverbial success. A new Constitution was proclaimed, 1876, exceeding in its radical character anything contemplated by the guaranteeing Powers. But Europe had enough of Turkish constitutions.

Such was the position of affairs when Russia again interposed, and offered to secure, by force of arms, the due performance by the Sultan of his treaty obligations. The Bulgarian massacres were by this time arresting the attention of Europe, France had been crippled by the Franco-German War, Germany and Austria were in alliance with the Czar, Italy was also friendly, even England was lukewarm—all, in short, were prepared to stand aside and give Russia, so far, a free hand in the settlement of the now reopened question.

We cannot give details of the Turco-Russian war which followed, the brave endurance of General Gourko and his forces, the desperate resistance of Osman Pasha, until, by the fall of Plevna, the struggle was virtually ended.

The Turkish Government had taken no notice of any of its defeats in the official press, and had considerable difficulty in climbing down so far as to give any indication of a desire for peace.

But the victorious Russian army was pressing on to San Stefano, only six miles from Constantinople, and the serious nature of the position could no longer be dissembled. One sure pre-

cursor of the commencement of pacific negotiations was noted in the change of tone of reference to Russia.

The official press saw fit to warn the people not to speak of Russia as the Bear of the North, as such language was disrespectful, and contrary to the rules of courtesy in vogue among civilized nations.

The war was finally concluded under the shadow of Constantinople by the Treaty of San Stefano (March, 1878).

At the date of the Treaty of San Stefano, Russia was occupying, by right of conquest, a portion of Turkish Armenia. She had taken possession of Kars and Erzeroum. Not only had a number of Armenian officers, subjects of Russia, fought bravely in the ranks, but the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army of Asia was an Armenian, Loris Melikoff.

We are therefore prepared to learn that to this treaty belongs the distinction of being the first to mention the name of Armenia.

The protocol and agreement for an armistice, signed at Adrianople immediately previous to the San Stefano Treaty, makes no mention of the Armenians. But the energetic patriarch, Nerces, got the omission rectified.

In the San Stefano Treaty two facts were recognised—the necessity of local reforms and of the safe-guarding of the Armenians from the outbreaks of the Kurds and Circassians. The treaty

was a Turco-Russian agreement, and its sixteenth Article, forming the basis of the sixty-first Article of the Berlin Treaty, ran thus :

‘As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupy in Armenia, and which is to be restored to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, the Sublime Porte engages to carry into effect, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Kurds and Circassians.’

Nowhere did the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano arouse more jealousy than in this country. The Treaty had been, it was said, in a memorandum issued by the Porte, extorted from Turkey by the ‘permanent pressure’ of Russia.

It was argued that it was opposed to the governing principle of the Treaty of Paris, which placed the affairs of Turkey under European and not any individual supervision.

Then followed much talk of British interests and British influence, the dispatch of the fleet to Besika Bay, and preparations for the coming conflict if we did not get our own way.

In these circumstances the final arrangements for the Berlin Congress were carried through,

and Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury were sent as our plenipotentiaries to the Congress. By a memorandum previously drawn up and signed at London (May, 1878) by the Marquis of Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff, it had been agreed that : 'The promises respecting Armenia stipulated in the preliminary Treaty of San Stefano must not be made exclusively to Russia, but to England also.'

The task of the Berlin Congress was therefore thus described by its President, Prince Bismarck : 'It is for the purpose of submitting the work of San Stefano to the signatory Powers of the treaties of 1856 and 1871 for free discussion that we have met.'

The Congress was, however, accompanied by a transaction of another kind which it required all the resources of the Jingoës of the day to explain, and even plausibly defend. This was the private treaty between England and Turkey, known as the Anglo-Turkish or Cyprus Convention. Its first Article runs thus : 'His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan, promises to England to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the two Powers, into the government and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories [Armenia]; and in order to enable England to make necessary provision for executing her engagement [the keeping of Russia out of Armenia], His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan,

Cyprus Convention and Berlin Treaty 145

further consents to assign the Island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England.*

In July, 1878, on the motion of Lord Salisbury, the Congress adopted, in lieu of Article XVI. of the Treaty of San Stefano, the famous sixty-first Article of the Berlin Treaty. As thus remodelled, Russia was compelled to evacuate Armenia, and the Russian was exchanged for a European protectorate. A clause was introduced by which it

* 'The Anglo-Turkish Convention was in itself a gross and manifest breach of the public law of Europe. Because by the Treaty of Paris, the result of the Crimean War, it was solemnly enacted that everything that pertained to the integrity and independence of Turkey and to the relations between the Sultan and his subjects was matter not for the cognisance of one particular Power, but for the joint cognisance of the Great Powers of Europe. And what did we do in 1878? When the Russian War with Turkey came to a close we held Turkey rigidly to that principle. We insisted that the treaty she had made should be subject to the review of Europe, and that Europe should be entitled to a final judgment on these matters which fell within the scope of the Treaty of Paris. We did that, and we even wasted £6,000,000 in warlike preparations for giving effect to that declaration. We then brought together at Berlin, or assisted to bring together at Berlin, the Powers of Europe, for the purpose of exercising this supreme jurisdiction; and while they were there, while they were at work, and without the knowledge of any one of them except Turkey, we extorted from the Sultan of Turkey—I am afraid by threatening him with abandoning the advocacy of his cause before the Congress—we extorted from the Sultan of Turkey the Anglo-Turkish Convention. But the Anglo-Turkish Convention was a convention which aimed at giving us power, in the teeth of the Treaty of Paris, between the Sultan and his subjects; and it was a convention which virtually severed from his empire the possession of the island of Cyprus. It interfered with the integrity, it interfered with the independence. It broke the Treaty of Paris, and the Treaty of Paris was the public law of Europe.'—GLADSTONE, *Glasgow, December 1, 1879.*

was stipulated that Turkey will make known periodically the steps taken to carry out the reforms to the Powers, who will superintend their application.

The sixty-second Article of the treaty guarantees the largest possible measure of religious reform to all the Christian subjects of the Porte, including, of course, the Armenians.

A deputation of Armenians had attended the Congress, and expressed their views regarding the prospective reforms. They were at one in their joy over the advance that seemed to be made. Again the old men began to see visions and the young men to dream dreams.

The strategy and success of the plenipotentiaries of England at the Berlin Congress had been blazoned abroad before it was well known what had actually been done.

We hear now not a little of the apotheosis of Russia. In those halcyon times the apotheosis of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury was the order of the day.*

The return of the diplomatists from Berlin was a red-letter day in the history of our country. A holiday crowd tumultuously cheered them on

* This was popularly expressed in one of the ballads of the day, thus :

‘ Ho, such a noise, for the Jingo boys
Are shouting about like mad.
Great Beaconsfield has made Europe yield
To his every word and fad !’

their arrival at Dover. The ovation was continued along the route from Dover to Downing Street, and Lord Beaconsfield was saluted, in anticipation of new honours, as Duke of Cyprus.

The scene at Downing Street was dramatic in no ordinary degree. It was enlivened and rendered memorable by the closing performance of the two grand actors.

In response to a call from the jubilant crowd for a speech, Lord Beaconsfield stepped forward and said: 'Lord Salisbury and myself have brought you back Peace, but a Peace, I hope, with Honour, which may satisfy our Sovereign, and tend to the welfare of the country.' Lord Salisbury, who 'had pulled the labouring oar' at the Congress, spoke in a similar buoyant strain, and was confident the British nation 'would always support a Government which supports the honour of England.'

Among the other trophies of this great diplomatic victory, the Cyprus White Elephant was frequently exhibited to admiring multitudes, and much applauded. Its suicidal tendency towards eating off its own head had not then been so generally suspected as to damp the popular enthusiasm in the acquisition of this new prodigy.

We may now, ere we leave our subject, take a parting glance at the region we have traversed far too hurriedly to mark more than a few points of outstanding prominence. We have seen the Powers of Europe—in the dark hour of Young

Armenia's distress at the failure of internal reform on the basis of the Constitution of the Sultan—come forward to her aid. Their first service is to steady the decrepit tyrant on his tottering throne, and to put new strength into his palsied hand, as well as a rod of iron by which he might dash in pieces his enemies. They then extort from him promises of reform, all the time protesting they do not mean to interfere with his internal affairs. He, on the other hand, is ready to throw himself into their arms, and of his own spontaneous motion to convert his dominions into an ideal Mohammedan paradise. The winter of discontent is now about to end for Armenia. Her previous sufferings seem at last to have purchased a long immunity from sorrow. But the delusion has begun to dispel. The Sultan was only in sport, playing a familiar and favourite game with the infidel.

But the hour has come for a new departure. The voice of war has been heard threatening from a quarter where the thunder was never wont to be mere stage thunder. The Sultan is once more upon his knees to the higher power. He is profuse in vows and prayers. Yet all would have been of little avail had not Europe come forward in what she deemed her own best interests—to save him, or at least give him a respite, from the impending doom. Foremost among those powers as accepting responsibility—and depriving Armenia of the proffered services of Russia—

ranks our own British Empire. Henceforth more stringent conditions are imposed on the reforming Turk, and more ample guarantees are accepted for their fulfilment. We need not wonder that many were confident that a new era had at last dawned, and that the tragedy of Turkish misrule was drawing near its close.

The net outcome of that historical gathering at Berlin—as we were told by one of the most prominent members of the Congress, a master of epigrammatic phrase—was ‘Peace with Honour.’ Never assuredly was a political forecast more ignominiously discredited by the sober truth of history.

CHAPTER VII.

Position of Armenia after the Treaty of Berlin—Bright prospects—Turkish reforms—Attitude of European Concert—Consular reports—Comments of British Press—Hamidieh Cavalry—Sassoun massacres, 1894—New reforms.

AT the close of the sittings of the Berlin Congress Turkey was subjected to a European Protectorate, which undertook the grave responsibility of outlining and supervising certain reforms in the Ottoman Empire, and above all in Armenia.

The Armenians were not mentioned in the protocol of Adrianople, nor even in the Treaty of San Stefano, until the omission, in the latter, was supplied at the eleventh hour by the heroic interposition of their Patriarch Nerses. They were included by name in the Treaty of Berlin, in the 61st Article, drawn up by Lord Salisbury, and emphasis was laid upon their case in the terms of the Cyprus Convention. And now, not only youthful patriots, speaking through their mouth-piece Nerses, but also aged and venerable European statesmen began to indulge the vision of a regenerated Armenia. The scattered families of Haik were to reassemble around their long-

desolated firesides, and to restore the ruined sanctuaries of the God of their fathers. Industry and Commerce were again to lift up their heads. Expeditions were to be furnished forth more wondrous than that of Jason in search of the golden fleece, and England was to act the part of Medea.

It was hardly to be expected that Russia would be so enthusiastic about the new order of things. Her attitude might be expressed in the words recently used by Prince Lobanoff to Sir F. Lascelles that 'her direct interests on the frontier forbade her to indulge in the philanthropic dreams which seemed to prevail in England, whose interests, on account of her insular position and distance from the Armenian districts, were not directly affected.'

Meantime, two things had become quite clear. New and weighty obligations had been undertaken by the European Powers in the engagements of the Treaty of Berlin, and by England in particular through her sacrifice of blood and treasure along with France in the Crimean War and the Cyprus Convention. These engagements, to begin with, were avowed and gloried in as triumphs of diplomacy by their chief author, Lord Salisbury. But for long it has become the fashion to ignore or disown them. On June 28, 1889, Lord Salisbury, in the House of Lords, repudiated special responsibility. 'England,' he said, 'is not the protector of Turkey, and cannot

exercise the rights of guardianship over her.' Quite recently, in his speech at the Hotel Metropole, he declared, referring to the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin, and ignoring the Cyprus Convention, that in it 'the six Powers agree *not to any outside person*, but to each other, that *if* the Sultan promulgates certain reforms, they will watch over the execution of them.' For the improbable contingency of the conversion of the Sultan, and of his government along with him, Lord Salisbury, it thus appears, sets aside the proffered services of the only Christian power prepared to take forcible and immediate measures to ensure these reforms.

The reforms were : protection of life and property, deliverance from an iniquitous system of over taxation and civil disabilities, from personal dishonour and from the evils of a despotism modelled on the worst types of Moslem tyranny. Did either Lord Salisbury, or any of the other signatories of the Treaty, expect these reforms from the Turk, whose independent action they so jealously guarded from outside interference? If so, then—as we have already said—never was political forecast more completely discredited by the experience of the past, which they knew so well, and in due time by the history of the future. The disavowal of responsibility by Lord Salisbury for the carrying out of these reforms, must be considered in the light of the actual provisions of Treaty engagements, the *raison d'être* of our

occupation of Cyprus, and in the light of the record of British diplomacy at Constantinople, particularly as revealed in the authoritative statements of the Blue Books as far as these are available. We will glance at this record cursorily, keeping in view in particular the inquiries and results of Mr. M. G. Rolin-Jæquemyns, in his 'Armenia, the Armenians and the Treaties,' so far as the authoritative sources are available, *i.e.*, from 1879 to 1881, and then over a long period of official silence reluctantly broken by some comparatively brief utterances in 1889-90. We shall from this point refer mainly to the statements recently presented to both Houses of Parliament in the Blue Books relating to Turkey, 1896. These volumes contain correspondence respecting the Introduction of Reforms in the Armenian Provinces of Asiatic Turkey, correspondence relative to the Armenian Question and Reports from her Majesty's Consular Officers in Asiatic Turkey, and correspondence relating to the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey.

No satisfactory explanation has been given of the withholding of consular reports between 1881-89. Mr. Gladstone, in a speech in the House of Commons, May 28, 1889, speaks of it as the adoption, or liable to be confounded with, 'the adoption of the principle of eternal silence about the horrors that prevail in Armenia.'

Our cursory review will embrace three periods : (1) 1878-81, (2) 1881-89, (3) 1889—onwards.

As to the first period (1878-81). This is a brief season of initial efforts at reformation. The consular reports were furnished from Eastern Turkey by such highly competent authorities as Captains Trotter and Everett (Erzeroum), Clayton (Mush), Messrs. Wilson (Anatolia) and Chermiside (Sivas), etc.

Let us endeavour to get a bird's-eye view of Armenia during these three years, when it was just entering the political paradise whose prospective delights were inflaming the imagination of our Western statesmen.

The Russo-Turkish war practically ceased with the armistice, January 31, 1878. Towards the close of that year (December 21) Captain Trotter reports that the present condition of Christians throughout the district (except Diarbekir) is 'worse than it has been at any period during the past several years.'*

In the provinces the rulers are of three grades: the highest the vali (governor-general of vilayet province), next the mutessarif (prefect of sandjak districts), and, lowest, the kaimakam and mudir (sub-prefects and mayors of casas, sub-districts, and native parishes). These rulers are often changed, and get their appointments by bribery, and hence they are tempted to recoup themselves from the people as best they may, and so they, along with the ill-paid or unpaid soldier and zaptieh, are the official robbers of the provinces.

* Blue Book, Turkey, No. 10 (1879), p. 8.

On complaints of their depredations and outrages being made by the consuls to Lord Salisbury, and instructions requested as to how far the consul was warranted to press reforms, Lord Salisbury replies, May 21, 1879, referring to treaty obligations: 'The Sultan is bound not only to promulgate new and better laws, but to *actually introduce* reforms.'* The Porte is again and again warned by the British ambassador that if he do not initiate reforms, he will create another Bulgaria in Asiatic Turkey, and this the moderate Armenians do not desire. They only demand protection to life and honour, and equal rights with the Mussulmans. The grand vizier pleads in excuse for inaction in reform the want of money.

In Western Turkey (Armenia Minor), and even within a short distance of Constantinople, things were as bad, or even worse, than farther east. Here the plague of the Circassian refugees was acting as a visitation of locusts, and one encouraged by the Sultan. The new region, the creation of the genius mainly of English statesmen, was turning out to be, not the Paradiso of their dreams, but a veritable Inferno. The truth is, there was another dreamer of dreams in the Yildiz kiosk. Sultan Abdul Hamid, himself on the mother's side an Armenian, and combining the worst qualities of the Armenian and Moslem, was a true Oriental visionary. When Turkey could no longer hold out against Russia, there was a salve for the

* Blue Book, Turkey, No. 10 (1879), p. 76.

wounded national pride in a dream of the pious Sultan. He saw the Prophet in a vision of the night, and was told by him that enough Russians had been killed. Abdul Hamid also saw a vision of himself as an ideal Moslem despot and patron saint of Islam. The character and ideals of Abdul Hamid enter as an important factor into the working-out of the entire problem known as the Eastern Question.

What, then, is the normal aspect of the Turkish *régime*, as we may trace it in its influence on the national life of Turkey so ruled, and as it still continues to exist? This bears on finance, justice, police, and central and local government. Mr. Rolin-Jæquemyns conclusively proves that all these departments are radically corrupt. There is no end to oppressive taxation, abuses of the law of the hospitality tax, and no account of maltreatment of non-Moslems will ever be taken as long as the valis are able to honour the *havales*, or money-orders, of the Sultan. The mal-administration of justice arises partly from the evils inherent in the legal system, especially of the Sheriat Courts, but chiefly from the low character of its administrators. 'The first consideration of the administrator of justice,' says Mr. Everett, 'is the amount of money that can be extorted from an individual, and the second is his creed; for it is an established principle, which in fact guides the conduct of a court throughout a trial, that a favourable decision shall be given to him who will

pay the most for it, some abatement being allowed under certain circumstances to a Mohammedan when engaged in a suit with a Christian.* As to the condition of the police and gendarmerie, no improvements were made. 'The old system with all its abuses obtains'† (Chermside). Mr. Everett thus describes this old system: 'Firstly, there are not sufficient police; secondly, there are no good officers; and, thirdly, there is collusion between the local authorities and the robbers.'‡ We will not comment on the evils of either central or local administration farther than to say that the whole system is an organized hypocrisy, wearing the garb and, so far as possible, using the phraseology of the civilization of the nineteenth century.

But had the European concert really done nothing during this period to promote reform? Had England made no effort to redeem her pledges? In 1879 a British squadron was ordered to the Archipelago to enforce the stipulated reforms. The Sultan took alarm and promised everything. In June, 1880, an identical note (and again in September of the same year, a collective note of the Powers) demanded the execution of the stipulations, declaring that 'the interest of Europe as well as of the Ottoman Empire requires the observance of the sixty-first

* Blue Book, Turkey, No. 8 (1881), p. 109.

† *Ibid.*, No. 6 (1881), p. 91.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Article of the Treaty of Berlin, and that the joint and incessant action of the Powers can alone bring about this result.' The Sultan replied to this appeal renewing his former pledges, and hinting that his government was the unfortunate subject of persistent prejudice and calumny. In 1881 Earl Granville made an effort to induce the Powers to unite in a further remonstrance, but without success. Both France and Germany saw 'serious inconvenience' in raising the Armenian question. The effect of this attitude was to postpone indefinitely all collective action of the Powers on behalf of Armenia.

The period 1881-89 is one of diplomatic silence. The conversion of the Sultan has not proved so easy a matter as was supposed, and the pressure upon him of the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin is relaxed. Things are allowed to drift. Bismark, as we have seen, deemed it well to let the Armenian question rest for a time, and France acquiesced. Russia professed to be full of devotion to the cause of the liberties of the Armenians, but could not forget the Turkish Convention, and the foolish jubilations to which it gave rise in England.

The concert of Europe—crossed as it was by this isolated action on the part of England—instead of prosecuting reforms in Armenia, busied itself in carrying out the twenty-fourth Article of the Treaty regarding the rectification of the frontier between Greece and Montenegro.

The temper of Turkish rule in Asia Minor during this period, no doubt fostered by the inaction of the Powers, is illustrated by such examples as the assassination by a band of Kurds of two inoffensive American citizens, Messrs. Knapp and Reynolds (1883), while travelling through the eastern districts. The ambassador of the United States met with insulting treatment on his visit to the grand vizier anent this outrage. The Turkish government neither acknowledged communications from the American Government, nor took any notice of the indemnity demanded for the murderous assault.

During this season of their dumb sorrows the Armenians suffered more than before the treaty from the ravages of Turks, Kurds and Circassians, from repression of all liberty of thought and action, and the deprivation of the most elementary rights of citizenship. We shall not further seek at this stage to withdraw the veil which the tender mercies of our government cast over the horror-stricken countenances of the Armenians as they gradually awoke to the discovery of the betrayal of their hopes and aspirations.

But the diplomatic narrative is resumed in the third and last period of our brief review. A very cursory glance over the pages of the Blue Books of 1895-96 will enable us to trace the main current of events, and the general character of the correspondence between this country and the chief parties concerned in the interests of Armenia.

The Armenians, it is evident, were systematically oppressed and degraded. Their patient endurance of wrong is one of their most striking characteristics. What the Turk stigmatized as rebellion was nothing else than a protest against intolerable tyranny. The simple expression of dissatisfaction in any form with the imperial modes of oppression was insurrection. 'I believe,' says Mr. Clifford Lloyd, consul at Erzeroum (October 2, 1890), 'that the idea of revolution is not entertained by any class of the Armenian people in these provinces, whatever may be the aims of those outside them. An armed revolution is, besides, impossible.' The official reports from consul and ambassador bear ample witness to the fictitious crimes charged upon the Armenians, and the appalling numbers of wanton arrests on groundless suspicion, or pretext of suspicion. Sometimes, under a burning sense of 'the inexpressible wrong, the unutterable shame,' or other fiendish outrage for which there was no redress, an avenger appeared who did exact the penalty of the crime without the formalities of Ottoman law, and this was, of course, entirely unconstitutional.

In reference to the arrest of a large number of Armenian suspects—over three-score—about the Narman district for the murder of four Turkish brigands, Consul Hampson says: 'It appears to me indisputable that the origin of all this trouble is the neglect of the local government to secure

the proper punishment of the murderers of the three Armenians last year.*

Only less obnoxious to the Sultan than these Armenian rebellions were the frank utterances of the English Press. To that Briarean monster the same drastic treatment could not, of course, be applied, as would have been the case had his headquarters been in Constantinople. The *Daily News*, it seems, had been grossly exaggerating the number of political prisoners in Erzeroum, Van, and Mush. The veracious Turkish officials could only be brought to own over one half of the number of the 700 alleged political suspects or others charged with political crimes, in prison.† Side by side with Abdul Hamid's denunciations of the British Press came the decoration of Zekki Pasha, his chief agent in the Sassoun massacres, and the silk banners with which he rewarded the zeal of the Kurdish chiefs.

Just as the Valis of Eastern Asiatic Turkey are reporting, after a tour of inspection of their provinces, that all is tranquil, the military reserves

* Blue Book, No. 3 (1896), p. 3.

† Blue Book, No. 2 (1896), p. 57. The following extract from a report by the Hon. R. Lister on the prisons of Constantinople (October 17, 1895), clearly proves how utterly worthless are the statements of Turkish officials on such matters. 'His excellency (the Turkish minister of police), stated that only 170 Armenians had been arrested, but this is palpably untrue, as I myself saw 299.' Mr. Lister's report relates to an official inspection of the prisons of Constantinople immediately after the disturbances there, and he is specially thanked for it by Lord Salisbury.

are being mysteriously mobilized. There are conjectures as to the meaning of this. In Western Turkey (Armenia Minor), the Bishop of Zeitoun and his fellow suspects, after an imprisonment of sixteen months, are undergoing their mock trial.

The reforming Turk is manifestly not idle. Meantime, Lord Salisbury writes as follows to the new ambassador at Constantinople—Sir Clare Ford—March 17, 1892: 'I think it desirable, on the occasion of your assumption of the duties of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Sultan, to invite your excellency's attention to the question of the condition of the Asiatic provinces of Turkey, and to the correspondence on the subject which is in the Embassy archives. Owing to the difficulty of securing any concerted action in the matter by the Powers parties to the Treaty of Berlin, Her Majesty's Government *have of late years desisted from urging upon the Porte the introduction of general reforms in fulfilment of its obligations under Article LXI. of that Treaty*, and have confined themselves to bringing to the notice of the Sultan's ministers the most prominent instances of misgovernment and outrage which have been reported by her Majesty's consular officers. Her Majesty's Government would wish your Excellency to continue to act on these lines.'*

The scheme of the creation of the military Militia—now notorious as the Hamidieh Cavalry

* Blue Book, No. 3 (1896), p. 8. *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 34.

—had been launched in the previous year. ‘The initiative of this happy idea,’ says the official announcement, ‘and the great success which will certainly crown its execution, are due to the wisdom and foresight of his Imperial Majesty the Sultan.’

The Kurdish chiefs indulged in some preliminary massacres among their own tribes, arising from disputes about precedence, and by way of preparation for their grand mission. That mission was to see that no evil consequences resulted from the Turkish reforms, and, in brief, to substitute as quickly as possible a Kurdish for an Armenian population on the borders of Russia and Persia.

These, in the case of a Cossack invasion, would be likely to form a more reliable barrier than the evil-affected infidel. By the middle of 1892, Zekki Pasha (the Marshal of the 4th Army Corps) is busy organizing, enrolling and presenting colours to the Hamidieh regiments. The consul at Diarbekir states that the Marshal had a brilliant reception, and that ‘the Hamidieh regiments in their new uniform looked very smart and soldier-like, and their behaviour during their stay here was every way orderly.’

Zekki Pasha is able to announce at Van (in June) that full forty regiments of Kurds had been formed, which would give a body of some 20,000 cavalry. A detailed description of this brigand militia is given by Colonel Chermside in his re-

port to the British Ambassador, December 15, 1892.

In vain did the Armenians of Mush and other districts, discerning too well the meaning of these movements, appeal for timely protection. The policy of non-interference, in which Lord Salisbury had been indoctrinating the representatives of our government, was absolutely fatal to all such appeals. As a matter of fact, the outcry of alarm was unheeded.

The Turk did indeed confess that things were unsettled, but he was doing his best to remedy all grievances. When his attention was drawn to the ill-treatment, by his creatures, of the English traveller, Rev. C. H. Robinson—who could not help being an eye-witness of Moslem outrages, and whose testimony there was good reason to dread—his Majesty could not believe his ears, that his people would show any other feeling than true Moslem respect to ‘that great and friendly nation.’

The year 1893 is a period of revolutionary scares in the Turkish Empire. For such a time the Hamidieh were called into existence, and it must come. Early in the year seditious placards were displayed in Marsovan, Amassia, Tokat, Angora, Diarbekir, and elsewhere.

The Turkish Government suspected the Armenians as the authors. Then followed a tragedy of oppression of an innocent people, to discover among them the evidence of disaffection to the

government. The houses of the people were ransacked, their inmates outraged, and wholesale arrests were made on suspicion. Marsovan and the neighbouring districts were regarded as the chief centres of the insurrection. The Turkish leader set fire, it was supposed, to the American college at Marsovan, and then charged the missionaries as being the incendiaries.

The placards—the main cause of these atrocities—emanated, it was believed, by those best qualified to form a judgment, not from the Armenians, but from the Moslems themselves.

The Armenians were, no doubt, in course of time implicated, and perhaps used as tools in the movement. They were instigated and misled, so far as they could be induced to adopt questionable methods, by foreign influence from Armenian committees in Athens, Geneva, Marseilles, Paris, and London.

The truth was, there were two revolutions of somewhat different complexions in progress in Turkey—the one Moslem, the other Armenian. The leaders of the former, *i.e.*, the Softas (theological students) recently expelled from Constantinople, and now scattered through the provinces, were probably the authors of the seditious placards which led to the arrest of some 1,800 Armenian suspects, and to what Lord Rosebery designates as the cruel farce of the Angora trials.

‘It is more than probable,’ writes Consul Longworth, ‘that with some kind of Armenian

association a Moslem secret society exists, or perhaps co-operates.’*

The Armenian rebellion, we doubt not, when the drama has been played out, will yet be regarded as a noble movement of the ancient national spirit—not always, indeed, wisely guided as to its methods—towards that freedom for which our own Empire had at one time to struggle through prisons and inquisitions and star-chambers, amid the gruesome orgies of the scaffold and the stake. But these are rather high-flown sentiments, for, after all, what right have these dogs of Nazarenes to move their tongues against the immaculate Moslem? Why should they not suffer in silence—die, and make no sign? Alas! the tragedy of the year 1894 makes it only too plain that this is what thousands of this unhappy people have done, and are still doing!

In 1894 took place the massacres of Sassoun, when, under the command of Zekki Pasha, the Turkish soldiers, along with their Hamidieh con-

* Blue Book, No. 3 (1896), p. 121. The following paragraph appeared recently in the newspapers: The Press Association says: ‘An appeal to European nations has been issued by the Turkish Reform League, in which a plan of campaign is outlined for the deposition of the Sultan. Having appealed to Germany and England in turn, the reformers implore Europe for aid, even if it should result in breaking up the Ottoman Empire. The only means, they declare, of releasing the Empire from its horrible misrule is the speedy removal of the tyrant Caliph. European Governments, had they the will, could force the Dardanelles, and, surrounding Yildiz Kiosk with marines, depose the Sultan, placing him on board a gunboat, and not twenty lives would be lost in the resistance of the Palace Guard.’

tingent, entered with due formality upon the work of avowed extermination of the Armenians. The abbot of Mush informed the British consul at Erzeroum of the forthcoming onslaught, but, as we have already said, the British Government could not interfere with the internal affairs of a friendly nation.

Mr. Greene gives a graphic picture of these blood-curdling scenes in his chapter of horrors on the evidence of reliable witnesses. 'The Turks,' says Dr. Dillon, 'in their confidential moods, have admitted these and worse acts of savagery; the Kurds glory in them at all times; trustworthy Europeans have witnessed and described them, and Armenians groaned over them in blank despair. Officers and nobles in the Sultan's own cavalry regiments, like Mostigo the Kurd, bruit abroad with unpardonable pride the story of the long series of rapes and murders which marked their official careers, and laugh to scorn the notion of being punished for robbing and killing the Armenians, whom the Sublime Porte desires them to exterminate.'*

The bare outline of the narrative is somewhat as follows. In May, 1893, a revolutionist named Damatian was captured in the neighbourhood of Mush, and thrown into the now notorious Bitlis prison. The whole district of Mush and Talvoreeg was declared to be in a state of scarcely veiled rebellion. No doubt there was inability to pay

* *Contemporary Review*, January, 1896. 'Armenia: an Appeal.'

double taxes—first to Kurds, and then to the government. Even if there were few or any agitators in this district, there was an undue preponderance of Armenians, and therefore a necessity for diminishing the population. It is, it seems, a suggestive fact that the Turks, as a race, are becoming extinct, while the Armenians under normal circumstances are a growing people. The Turkish debauchee cannot keep pace as to increase of his kind with his Armenian vassal, and hence the periodic massacre, at least if stronger measures cannot be adopted.

More plausible pretexts, however, had to be sought for so gigantic an undertaking as the extermination of the Armenian population of Sassoun. It was of course forthcoming; the Turk is never long at a loss in such a case. Some Kurdish brigands, coming ostensibly to collect double taxes, carried off as an incident of the visit—and a quite commonplace incident—a few of the cattle of the impoverished villagers. The Armenians, in the struggle to recover their property and means of livelihood, killed four Kurdish brigands. This, beyond doubt, was rebellion, and orders were forthwith issued from Constantinople to the soldiery, Kurds included, to destroy utterly every Armenian—man, woman and child—in the rebel district. It is said that Zekki Pasha read to his motley host these orders, and hung the royal firman as an ornament upon his breast.

In August, 1894, began that awful ordeal of

indiscriminate massacre of man, woman and child in the Sassoun district, estimated (though the exact number can now never be known) at 15,000, some placing the figures lower and others much higher.

We shall give only a single picture of this Mohammedan saturnalia, drawn for us by one of the correspondents of Mr. Greene whose veracity is beyond suspicion. 'The region was surrounded by soldiers of the army, and 20,000 Kurds also are said to have been massed there. Then they advanced upon the centre, driving in the people like a flock of sheep, and continued thus to advance for days. No quarter was given, no mercy shown—men, women and children shot down or butchered like sheep. Probably, when they were set upon in this way, some tried to save their lives and resisted in self-defence. Many who could fled in all directions, but the majority were slain. The most probable estimate is 15,000 killed, thirty-five villages plundered, razed, burnt. Women were outraged and then butchered; a priest taken to the roof of his church and hacked to pieces; young men piled in with wood saturated with kerosene and set on fire; a large number of women and girls collected in church, kept for days, violated by the brutal soldiers, and then murdered.'

Such were the Sassoun massacres, and yet it has been pathetically declared by those who have good reason to know best that the butchery of Sassoun is but a drop in the ocean of Armenian blood shed

gradually and silently over the empire since the late Turko-Russian war.

As a sulky concession to the advice of the Powers, a commission was appointed by the Sultan to proceed to the scene of the disturbances and inquire. Those who knew anything of the reforming Turk were able to appraise this concession at its proper value. The commission was a diplomatic expedient, in default of a better, to entertain the facile concert of Europe with a little grim comedy in the interludes of a too horrible tragedy, planned and now being executed before their eyes on a scale of unprecedented magnitude.

While the civilized world was still under the shock of the revelations of Sassoun, neither the Sultan nor his ministers seemed aware that anything unusual had taken place. On March 28, 1895, the Earl of Kimberley, in reference to an interview with Rustem Pasha at the Foreign Office, writes to Sir P. Currie: 'His Excellency spoke with much bitterness of what he considered were the exaggerated and unfounded statements of the atrocities alleged to have been committed by the Turkish soldiers in the Sassoun district.'* A discreet silence as to the atrocities became the order of the day all round, broken at times by a euphemistic allusion to the 'Sassoun occurrences' by the Sultan, or by an incredulous inquiry on the part of the grand vizier whether our ambassador

* Blue Book, No. 1 (1896), p. 12.

really thought there ever had been any Sassoun massacres.* Hints were indeed thrown out by our representatives that the neglect of the Turkish Government to exact punishment from the criminals of Sassoun notoriety was making a bad impression in England and in Europe.

This state of things the Turk could not understand, but, as it could not be entirely ignored, he would make inquiry. The year 1895 is largely a year of discussion of projected reforms in Turkey. One of the Blue Books submitted this year is devoted, we may say, wholly to the subject of these reforms, to which it gives 176 folio pages. They are somewhat wearisome reading, and we can only indicate their general current. The scheme of reforms originates with our British Ambassador, no doubt inspired from Downing Street. It is considered by the other ambassadors, and generally approved. The Powers give, in due course, their approval after modification, and with varying degrees of cordiality. Prince Lobanoff would concur, but he does not think there is now an Armenia. He has made inquiries and received conflicting accounts. He at last gives way, on condition that England does not intend to create a new Armenia or Bulgaria in Asiatic Turkey.

In the meantime the Sultan has appointed another Commission to draw up a counter-scheme of still better reforms. When the scheme of the ambassadors is laid before him he cautiously sets

* Blue Book, No. 1 (1896), p. 16.

it aside, first for consideration, then for rejection. Encouraged by the attitude of Prince Lobanoff, who objects decisively to pressure on the Sultan, compelling him to adopt the reforms, he gets bolder, and makes an effort to sow dissension among the European Powers. The German Emperor is approached to use his influence to moderate the pressure of the other Powers, but in vain.

In the meantime, Lord Salisbury, on his accession to power, is careful to inform Rustem Pasha that he supports entirely the policy which his government had inherited from their predecessors in office.*

His Lordship then shows considerable anxiety to convince Prince Lobanoff that England will not coerce the Sultan, and will not give autonomy in any form to the Armenians. The Russian minister, who, manifestly, is not prodigal of compliments, takes occasion at this unwonted and somewhat pathetic spectacle of the climbing down of the English Premier, to express his admiration of the moderate and statesmanlike attitude he had now assumed. The lion and the bear were at last about to lie down together. Disputes about commissions of control and commissions of surveillance were at an end. Under these fostering auspices Turkey gets a somewhat freer hand to reduce the reforms into their final shape. In October, 1895, the imperial iradé is issued, sanc-

* Blue Book, No. 1 (1896), p. 94.

tioning the new scheme of reforms, granting new political privileges to the Armenians of the vilayets of Erzeroum, Sivas Van, Diarbekir, Bitlis, and Mamouret-el-Aziz. The reforms are set forth with a flourish of Moslem trumpets as the embodiment of the glorious provisions of the Hatti-Humayoun, and as proceeding spontaneously from his imperial Majesty the Sultan.

The Valis are duly instructed to carry out the matters decided upon with extraordinary zeal, attention, and care in their districts, and to report in due course upon the results thus obtained.

From all these airy phantoms the imagination cannot help reverting to the actual state of things. We emerge from the region of fancy to find the blissful dream of Young Armenia replaced by a waking vision of saddest reality. As we glance back over the period we have been so cursorily reviewing, we see the good resolutions and solemn pledges of the Sultan succeeded by the most diabolical measures in defiance of civilization, and the most shameless breach of faith which has ever disgraced the history of any political power.

We have noted the descent to the nadir of Moslem oppression—in the elaborate preparations and first gigantic butchery, in the projected extermination of the Turkish Armenian.

We have surveyed from afar the region of the shadow of death. The one redeeming aspect of this doleful spectacle is the martyr spirit, the

martyr courage, of the brave Armenian sufferers. When the simple acceptance of the creed of Islam would have saved them from all their present woes, they elected to abide by the faith of Christ, and to seal their testimony with their blood.

CHAPTER VIII.

Renewal of massacres, 1895-96 — The Hindchag's Communication to the Embassies—Collective Note—Illustrative cases — Trebizond and Ourfa — Attitude of Prince Lobanoff—Responsibility for the massacres—Relation of the European Powers—The special responsibility of Great Britain—Question not closed—Solutions of the problem—Conclusion.

WHEN, after announcing his purpose of introducing his grand scheme of reforms, the Sultan expressed amazement that Lord Salisbury did not telegraph grateful thanks—he is reminded that his lordship had been on the outlook for the publication of the measures of reform, and was disappointed at the unaccountable delay. As the exchange of diplomatic courtesies proceeds the Sultan becomes hopeful that England must at last be satisfied with what he has done, but is reminded that much will depend on how the paper reforms are actually carried out.

Nothing, indeed, is more melancholy than the history of one of the Sultan's reformations, even as it may be traced in the unimpassioned consular reports. The reformation is the euphuism for a fresh outbreak of fanaticism on the part of the

Turk, and means, so far as the Armenians are concerned, another serious attempt at their extermination.

When Mr. Hampson, Vice-Consul at Mush, visits, in the month of August, five or six villages in that district, to make inquiries as to the truth of reports about the misconduct of the tax-collectors, a complaint has to be made to the Grand Vizier that the Turkish authorities had put every possible hindrance in his way so that he might not get at the facts. This unfriendly treatment is sufficiently explained by the results of such investigations as Mr. Hampson was able to make. In every village where he went he witnessed the most appalling scenes of misery inflicted by the Turks and Kurds, and was surrounded by crowds of men, women, and children whose cry was ever the same—‘Save us from the brutalities of the zaptiehs, save us from Reshid Effendi.’ Reshid Effendi was the miscreant who was Captain of the Police. The outrages of the zaptiehs, under his orders, are thus referred to by the Vice-Consul in his report: ‘Men are beaten, imprisoned, . . . women and girls are insulted and dishonoured, dragged naked from their beds at night; children are not spared, and these outrages are merely the amusement of the zaptiehs while engaged in selling the little remaining property of the villages at a quarter of its value.’ Such are the pleasantries which lighten the toil of the official tax-gatherer among

the impoverished, starving Armenians. At each fresh outrage the zaptiehs jeeringly tell the sufferers, 'Now go and complain to your foreign consuls!'

While these sickening scenes were being prolonged the 'Hindchag,' the Armenian Revolutionary Committee, addressed a communication to the Ambassadors at Constantinople, stating that a strictly peaceful demonstration was to be held, to express their desire for the carrying out of the promised reforms. A petition was drawn up protesting against admitted and clamant wrongs and demanding the long-deferred redress. In that touching appeal they refer to the Sassoun massacres, and declare that they have waited patiently for a whole year for some 'prompt and effective solution from the Powers which signed the Treaty of Berlin.'

The demonstration came off in Constantinople in the end of September and beginning of October. It was, of course, magnified into a daring rebellion, and such were the cruelties perpetrated upon the Armenians, whether implicated in the riot or otherwise, that the Powers took the unusual step of a remonstrance with the Sultan in the form of a collective Note.

This Note is as mild in tone and substance as diplomacy could make it. The outrages are referred to as 'regrettable incidents.' It is, however, distinctly declared that the excesses of the

* Blue Book, Turkey, No. 2 (1896), p. 17.

Turk cannot be excused, and 'will not fail to arouse the indignation of Europe if it becomes apparent that the supineness of the authorities is encouraging regrettable passions.'

But the massacres were once more the order of the day. The immunity with which the government had conducted their bold experiment of the Sassoun massacres had given them fresh courage to prosecute their policy. Threats were heard—and they were no empty words—of coming horrors, beside which the slaughter of Sassoun would sink into insignificance.

In the month of October broke out the massacres at Trebizond. For these it was found on investigation there was no cause arising from the insurrectionary action of the Armenians. Some 600 were tortured and vivisected at the outset. The plunder amounted to at least £200,000. The disturbances spread to Erzeroum and other parts of Eastern Turkey. But they did not stop there. The Turks and Circassians were already turning the Armenian centres in the West into a hell upon earth. Passions and appetites to which the very fiends of the pit are strangers, were freely indulged in the light of day and amid the sanctities of the domestic circle. The tragedies of Zeitoun, Marash, Ourfa, Aintab, and others, are no doubt fresh in the recollection of the reader.

Into the details of these we cannot go. A tabular statement at the close of *Blue Book, Turkey*, No. 2, gives an official estimate of the

numbers of the slaughtered victims during this period.

The character of the crimes invented and perpetrated on the hapless Armenians baffles all description. Yet an incident which can be related here and there reveals the nature of the ordeal of unutterable woe. We shall only venture upon two cases, by way of illustration, not worse than hundreds and thousands of similar tragedies. They occurred the one at Trebizond, and the other at Ourfa.

‘In Trebizond,’ says Dr. E. J. Dillon, ‘on the first day of the massacre, an Armenian was coming out of a baker’s shop, where he had been purchasing bread for his sick wife and family, when he was surprised by the raging crowd. Fascinated with terror, he stood still, was seized, and dashed to the ground. He pleaded piteously for mercy and pardon, and they quietly promised it; and so grim and dry was the humour of this crowd that the trembling wretch took their promise seriously, and offered them his heartfelt thanks. In truth, they were only joking. When they were ready to be serious, they tied the man’s feet together, and taunted him, but at first with the assumed gentleness that might well be mistaken for the harbinger of mercy. Then they cut off one of his hands, slapped his face with the bloody wrist, and placed it between his quivering lips. Soon afterwards they chopped off the other hand, and inquired whether he would like pen and

paper to write to his wife. Others requested him to make the sign of the Cross with his stumps, or with his feet, while he still possessed them, while others desired him to shout louder that his God might hear his cries for help. One of the most active members of the crowd then stepped forward and tore the man's ears from his head, after which he put them between his lips, and then flung them in his face. "That Effendi's mouth deserves to be punished for refusing such a choice morsel," exclaimed a voice in the crowd, whereupon somebody stepped forward, knocked out some of his teeth, and proceeded to cut out his tongue. "He will never blaspheme again," a pious Moslem jocosely remarked. Thereupon a dagger was placed under one of his eyes, which was scooped clean out of its socket. The hideous contortions of the man's discoloured face, the quick convulsions of his quivering body, and the sight of the ebbing blood turning the dry dust to gory mud, literally intoxicated these furious fanatics, who, having gouged out his other eye and chopped off his feet, hit upon some other excruciating tortures before cutting his throat and sending his soul "to damnation," as they expressed it. These other ingenious, pain-sharpening devices, however, were such as do not lend themselves to description.*

The brutal fanaticism of the Ourfa massacre may be gathered from the following extract from

* *Contemporary Review*, January, 1896. 'Armenia: an Appeal' (Dillon).

the Report of Vice-Consul Fitzmaurice to Sir P. Currie, dated Ourfa, March 16, 1896:

‘A few shots were fired, and a trumpet sounded the attack from among the soldiers, who were seen to open their ranks and allow the mob behind them to come forward. Soldiers and mob then rushed on the Armenian quarter, and began a general massacre of the males over a certain age.

‘The reserve troops, who knew the Armenian quarter well from their having been on guard there during the two preceding months, served both as guides and advance guard, being accompanied by a body of woodcutters, axe in hand, from the neighbouring mountains. The latter broke in the doors, whereupon the soldiers rushed in, emptying their Martinis on the Armenian men, from whom they had anticipated a certain resistance. They had, however, given up all their arms, and, in abject terror at their dreadful situation, pleaded for mercy for the sake of their women and children and the Prophet Jesus. With insulting language they were dragged out one by one from their hiding-places and brutally butchered. In many instances from fifteen to twenty men had collected in the larger houses, as affording some chance of safety. They were hurled out one after another to the executioners, who speedily dispatched them. In the house next to that of the Protestant pastor (he, too, was slain, leaving six orphans), where I put up during my stay here, forty men were thus put to death. A certain Sheikh ordered his

followers to bring as many stalwart young Armenians as they could find. They were, to the number of about 100, thrown on their backs, and held down by their hands and feet, while the Sheikh, with a combination of fanaticism and cruelty, proceeded, while reciting verses of the Koran, to cut their throats after the Mecca rite of sacrificing sheep.

‘The savage butchery of the previous day (*i.e.*, Saturday) was continued till noon, when took place the burning of the Ourfa Armenian Cathedral, an act which for fiendish barbarity has been unsurpassed by any of the horrors of recent massacres of Armenians, and for which the annals of history can furnish few, if any, parallels.

‘On Saturday night crowds of Armenian men, women and children took refuge in their fine Cathedral, capable of holding some 8,000 persons, and the priest administered the sacrament—the last sacrament as it proved to be—to 1,800 souls, recording the figure on one of the pillars of the church. These remained in the Cathedral overnight, and were joined on Sunday by several hundreds more, who sought the protection of a building which they considered safe from the mob-violence of the Mussulman even in his fanaticism. It is computed that at least 3,000 individuals were congregated in this edifice when the mob attacked it.

‘They at first fired in through the windows, then smashed in the iron door, and proceeded to

massacre all those, mostly men, who were on the ground-floor. . . . Having collected a quantity of bedding and the church matting, they poured some thirty cans of kerosene on it, as also on the dead bodies lying about, and then set fire to the whole. The gallery beams and wooden framework soon caught fire, whereupon, blocking up the staircases leading to the gallery with similar inflammable materials, they left the mass of struggling human beings to become the prey of the flames.

‘During several hours the sickening odour of roasted flesh pervaded the town, and even to-day, two months and a half after the massacre, the smell of putrescent and charred remains in the church is unbearable.’

Vice-Consul Fitzmaurice, as appears from his despatch given in the latest papers submitted to Parliament (and carrying down the official statement to the 26th May, 1896), expresses his belief that the Central Government is the real author of these massacres. He adds : ‘The general position of the Armenians here and in the surrounding country, if not indeed in the Asiatic provinces of the empire, is deplorable. They are practically considered as outlaws.’

But we have been somewhat anticipating what remains of our now closing survey.

In November last year (1895) Lord Salisbury again presses upon the Sultan a little more good advice about the reforms. He takes note of his

Majesty's friendship for this country, and does his best to assure him that the feeling is reciprocated in high quarters, as well as that Great Britain means to assist him in well-doing. At the same time there is not wanting something of that candour which is the privilege of friendship, and which, amid all these honeyed words, supplies the sting of a little wholesome sincerity. 'The fact,' says his lordship, 'that the Sultan recently decorated an officer whom he had dismissed on the ground of gross misgovernment does not encourage her Majesty's Government to feel any confidence in the earnestness of his Imperial Majesty's intentions to give serious effect to the promised measures of reform.'*

Prince Lobanoff is quite sure, from his experience in the East, that such disturbances as are occurring in Turkey, when unsupported by outside influence, soon die a natural death, and throws upon England the blame of the Constantinople and other massacres. England has been encouraging insurrection!

Under such auspices we need not wonder that the Powers do not see their way to interfere with the internal affairs of Turkey. This, says Prince Lobanoff, would be a violation of Article IX. of the Treaty of Paris, and Article LXIII. of the Treaty of Berlin. Treaty of Paris, and all the rest, Russia was more than ready in 1878, had the Powers not interdicted, to have kept her

* Blue Book, Turkey, No. 2 (1896), p. 122.

Cossacks in Turkey, and coerced the Sultan as to internal reforms.

To Prince Lobanoff the Sultan now appears as a glorified incarnation of reform, only he must be let alone, or rather assisted in carrying out his benevolent designs. Russia, he is confident, would not sanction any course of action which wore the aspect of a European interference.

Anything more callous, more distinctly a betrayal of the oppressed Armenians, than the memorandum in which Prince Lobanoff refuses to co-operate with the Powers to secure deliverance for these and other victims of Moslem outrage, it would be hard to find even in the records of Turkish diplomacy.*

As to the general question of responsibility for the ever-recurring massacres, the Turk would, of course, lay the entire blame on the Armenians and their abettors. The Armenians are rebels. This charge, however, has, as we have seen, been refuted over and over again by the most definite statements as to their non-revolutionary, law-abiding character by such authorities as Consuls Clifford, Lloyd, Chermiside, Hampson, etc. It is, indeed, admitted that the brutal treatment to which they are subjected is producing disaffection.

The responsibility for the misrule and massacres

* The recent expressions of the mind of Russia through Prince Lobanoff, and his general tone adopted towards our Government, make it somewhat difficult to accept the pleasing theory of the brilliant authoress of 'Russia and England' as to the traditional policy of Russia, in its bearing on the relations of the two countries.

of the Armenians is no doubt primarily to be charged on the Sultan and his creatures. There is abundant evidence that the arming of the Kurds and Circassians are only new developments in the traditional policy of wholesale slaughter. It was clearly foreseen by the Armenians and others before the outbreak of the recent series of massacres. Vain attempts also were made to induce the Powers, and especially our own English Government, to lay an arrest on the movement. The lifting of a finger by the arbiters of his fate would have saved the frantically appealing victim ; but it was not done.

The European Powers, as all the world knows, have contracted a special responsibility, not only on grounds of common humanity, but of definite treaty engagements. The setting aside of the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano, and the substitution of those of the Treaty of Berlin, was the replacing of a Turco-Russian by a Turco-European undertaking.

The Turk has, especially of late, had the effrontery, when pressed to remedy gross abuses, to inquire what right England has to interfere with her internal affairs. When the Turkish Ambassador proposed this innocent query to Lord Kimberley, his lordship referred him for answer to the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin. Whatever may be Lord Salisbury's present reading of that Article, there certainly was a time when he would have taken no lower ground.

But it is not only England that has come under special obligations: all the European Powers—signatories of the Treaty of Berlin—have undertaken the most solemn engagements in regard to Turkish reforms. They are each and all partners in a common trust, which, to the disgrace of the civilization of Christian Europe, they have, through their mutual jealousies, or from whatever cause, most ignominiously betrayed. Such is the grave, yet absolutely truthful, indictment. Of no one Power may this be separately true, as the responsibility is collective rather than individual, but it is certainly true of the European Concert as a whole.

The apportioning of blame where each has a share is a delicate task. It would seem as if Russia had so far departed from her traditional *rôle* of protector of her oppressed co-religionist in Turkey as to have decided to leave him to the tender mercies of a tyrant whose astutely-planned policy, she knows, is to outrage, torture, and crush him out of existence.

We may do less than justice to the other European Powers, but we hardly think we can have any treacherous bias against our own English Government. We assuredly do not object to any place of prominence the English nation may assume in regard to the solution of the gravest problem of the civilization of the nineteenth century.

The nation whose history is a series of heroic

conflicts and victories for popular freedom, whose rule is an embodiment of equity in the remotest corner of our most distant dependencies, most alien also in race and creed, is surely in its proper place when it undertakes to act as the prime mover in the redress of the terrible wrongs of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

England has taken this prominent position—a position so prominent that on her, above all others, must rest the blame, if blame there be, for the haunting horrors of Turkish misrule.

The Crimean War, with the Treaty of Paris, the Treaty of Berlin, the Cyprus Convention, are all witnesses of our manifold pledges. On this point we have already said enough in these pages. We, as a nation, have undertaken the task of Turkish reforms, and we have ignominiously failed. We have not only failed to redeem our pledges, we have, by incessant ineffective admonitions and corrosives directed to the sensitive parts of the Sultan's nature, produced fresh irritation, and induced new ordeals of persecution for the wretched Armenians.

Lord Salisbury has, it is true, begun to exchange not merely the language of bravado, but the bluff speech of an English statesman—which was not the least of his graces and claims to respect—for a style of watery compliment which must help to cheer the Sultan in his dreary solitude, and must somewhat surprise the novice in politics who has

Special Responsibility of Great Britain 189

been so boldly checkmating his lordship in St. Petersburg.

Yielding to the blind impulses of the Jingoism of the day, Lord Salisbury undertook, in 1878, responsibilities which could not easily be discharged, and did so in a manner so provocative of the jealousy of the Powers that they have never forgiven him, and have ever since, quietly but effectively, frustrated every feeble effort he has made to introduce the Turkish reforms.

Lord Salisbury's, it must be remembered, was the hand that tore up the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano guaranteeing deliverance to the Armenians. His was the hand which drew up the now dishonoured pledge of the Treaty of Berlin, as well as the terms of the Cyprus Convention, by which the English nation was degraded into an ally and accomplice of the Turk in his shameful misgovernment and oppression of his Christian subjects.

These are now the chief honours which his lordship has inherited from the historical transactions of 1878, and which promise to give him a unique name among the statesmen of England.

The case, then, both as regards the Powers of Europe and England, stands thus :

The Sultan has pledged himself, by the most solemn engagements, to remove all disabilities from his subjects, and to seek their comfort and happiness without distinction of race or religion. The Powers are, at the same time, aware that, so

far from an effort being made to carry out these repeated engagements, the daily lot of his victims has been becoming more intolerable. The most overwhelming evidence has been laid before them from all sides that outrages surpassing anything almost, if not altogether, within the range of history have been planned and carried out by the Turkish Government. All the subterfuges of perjured officials of Ottoman misrule, and of others interested in concealing or minimizing the enormities, have utterly failed of their object. Not only do the common obligations of humanity press upon the signatories, but also their legal responsibilities, and most of all those of this country, however loudly disavowed. On this subject, in his eloquent protest against such a disavowal, and as emphasizing this responsibility, the Duke of Argyll says: 'It is not too much to say that England has twice saved Turkey from complete subjection since 1853. It is largely, mainly due to our action that she now exists at all as an independent Power. On both occasions we dragged the Powers of Europe along with us in maintaining the Ottoman Government. . . . The rest of Europe does share with us in the terrible responsibility of bolstering up a decaying empire *from sheer jealousy of each other as to the division of the spoils.* But we share it in an especial degree because our jealousy of Russia was, and still is, pre-eminent among all the other jealousies concerned.'

It may not be that, as Lord Derby cynically expressed it, 'the last word of the Eastern Question is, Who is to have Constantinople?' There can, however, be no doubt, on such an authority as we have just quoted, that the difficulty of the division of the spoils is the main obstacle to a prompt and satisfactory solution of the problem.

It cannot fail to have a demoralizing effect upon the nations of Europe to stand aloof and remain passive in the face of wrongs which they are pledged not only to redress, but to have prevented.

We have been hearing much of the danger of pressing too far for the fulfilment of these pledges of reform so profusely given by the Sultan. But is it, then, safe for England to let it be understood that she can be bullied out of her definite treaty engagements? When this discovery is once made, are we not likely to have our hands full enough of similar business?

The question is not closed. The credit of England, her influence among the Powers of Europe, demand a different ending.

No doubt the practical question is, What is now to be done? So far this is a question which concerns every nation in Europe, this country above all others, and every one in it capable of thinking on the subject. Our country has thrown its ægis over the Armenians, and entered into a solemn league and covenant for their protection, and we are bound to see that, in some

fitting manner, that grand national trust shall be fulfilled. We have, as a self-governing people, an individual responsibility as to what a Parliament, elected by our suffrages, may or may not do with pledges tendered in our name. Surely our responsibilities, as a nation, are not discharged by permitting our ambassador at Constantinople, or our responsible ministers at Westminster, to give as they may see fit friendly, well-meaning advice to the Sultan.

Nor, again, can we hold that we, as a nation, atone for our betrayal of interests, dearer than life itself to the Armenians, by scanty doles of charitable relief to those whose distress we ought by every obligation of honour to have prevented. It is our bounden duty to give, and to give liberally, what financial relief we can afford. There is no true friend of the persecuted, homeless, starving Christians in Armenia who will not do their best to respond to the earnest appeals of the committee of the Armenian Relief Fund for some measure of help to these houseless, half-naked wanderers in woods and mountains, living in caves and hollow trees, and striving to support existence on greens and the leaves of the trees. It is something that our English nation is responding to these appeals. But the assistance is avowedly inadequate, so that only a small remnant of the sufferers can be relieved. Even were it otherwise, the horrible ordeal of butchery and foul lust goes on before the eyes

of Europe and the world. A letter from Constantinople, May 30, 1896, says: 'The Government measures are a perfect farce! We have a terrible and new appeal this week, and that is, for relief to the numbers of Armenian maidens, who, having been taken by the Kurds and Turks, and kept by them for several months, are now returned to their villages in the pangs of a prospective horrible motherhood. Who will keep these unfortunates and their offspring? I often ask myself, Is it not better to let these miserable creatures die at once than continue a wretched existence through the summer only to die from starvation and cold next winter?'

One other point remains to be emphasized—the perpetrators of the massacre must be punished.

After the Lebanon massacres of 1860, France and England saw the necessity of reading the Sultan and his subjects a lesson that the two Powers would not tolerate such outrage on the Christian subjects of Turkey. The punishment of the most deeply involved Pasha was demanded. He was reluctantly put on trial, but acquitted, Fuad Pasha, the Turkish Commissioner, declaring that the punishment of a Pasha would greatly excite the Mahommedan population. He was promptly informed that the populace had better keep their feelings well in hand, as he would be held responsible for any disturbances, and in the event of such taking place, English and French marines would occupy Damascus. The Turkish

Commissioner saw the game was up. The guilty Pasha was hanged forthwith, and there was no disturbance.

So long as it is understood that the Christian can be outraged with impunity, the plundering and murdering will continue. Till the punishment of the criminals has been sternly carried out no Christian life is worth a day's purchase. A premium is put on the outrages if it be supposed no punishment will fall on the offenders.

As regards the best practical solution of the problem, this may be safely left to the Government when once it has resolved to act. There is the scheme set forth and ably advocated by Canon MacColl in his pamphlet on 'England's Responsibility to Armenia,' and which follows the successful precedent of Lebanon. 'A constitution,' he says, 'must be drawn up for Armenia by some one acting on behalf of the great Powers, or those of them who have already intervened in this matter. And that constitution must insist as a minimum on the appointment of a Christian governor of Armenia, provided with some sort of force to maintain order: the governor either to be appointed directly by the Powers or subject to their approval, and irremovable without their sanction.' All the objections to this scheme were brought against the similar scheme of Lebanon, and were found to be utterly baseless. The Powers assumed an attitude of firmness, and the Lebanon experiment triumphed.

Ere we leave this subject, we may mention the scheme which Mr. Greene refers to as one of the most likely, having also the approval of Professor Bryce and the Phil-Armenian Society. This method is that of 'radical and vigorous administrative reforms, which the European Powers should initiate and report to Turkey, instead of *vice versâ*, as arranged in Article LXI. of the Berlin Treaty.'

But our task is now done. We have glanced at the drama of Armenian life both in earlier and later times. We have seen a native dynasty, or, rather, series of dynasties, come and go. We have watched the dawn of a new light on the hills and valleys of the country of Ararat, as they are trodden by the feet of the apostolic St. Gregory, and Armenia takes its place of honour among the nations as the first to give its glad welcome to the message of the Gospel. Around this sacred national shrine, it has been seen, all that is truly noble and enduring in the life of this people has henceforth revolved. Around it lie scattered, in profuse abundance, the martyred ashes of many generations of worshippers.

Our survey has led us to consider some outstanding points in the ascending arc of the rise and progress of the Turkish Empire. The influence of Islam has been noted, as it has influenced the character and rule of the Turk, and shaped and coloured the destiny of the Armenians.

We have further traced, so far, the course of

decline. We have indicated the vast programme and some steps in the formidable advances of Russia towards the acme of her ambition. The motto of that movement has ever been, and still is, the same—'Nulla vestigia retrorsum.'

We have stood by the sick-bed of the dying barbarian despot, and beheld his strange tenacity of existence, his prostrations, and wonderful recoveries.

We have witnessed the spectacle of the Concert of Europe combining and agreeing on almost nothing else save in an attempt to maintain the ghastly moribund tyrant on his tottering throne.

As we linger over this region of stirring associations, ancient and modern, we see in and around the fatherland of the children of Haik, and in the remotest regions of their dispersion through Asia Minor, one far-reaching Aceldama.

We tread the solitudes of a vast necropolis. Around us lie the mangled corpses of men, women, and children, who, ere they were thrust, many of them still alive, into the graves they had been compelled to dig for themselves, had endured every agony of mind and body which it is possible for human beings to undergo. Their long-protracted dying agonies had been the sport of the miscreants who meantime boasted that they were carrying out the express orders of the Sultan.

The burying-ground of these massacred, martyred Armenians is lined all around by a fast thinning circle of mourners, whose own doom is visibly

impending, and whose sobs and wails are a ceaseless funeral dirge falling on 'the dull, cold ear of death,' but falling also on the not less apathetic ear of their living and pledged protectors. Among these cold insensate spectators we behold the Powers of Christian Europe, and foremost among them Christian England, as represented by the present Premier. Here is the picture of a single corner of these saddest of all the realms of death.

'What I myself saw,' says an eye-witness, 'this Friday afternoon is for ever engraven on my mind as the most horrible sight a man can see. I went with one of the cavasses of the English Legation, a soldier my interpreter, and a photographer (Armenian) to the Armenian Gregorian Cemetery. The municipality had sent down a number of bodies, friends had brought more, and a horrible sight met my eyes. Along the wall on the north, in a row twenty feet wide and a hundred and fifty feet long, lay three hundred and twenty-one dead bodies of the massacred Armenians. Many were fearfully mangled and mutilated. I saw one with his face completely smashed in with a blow of some heavy weapon after he was killed. I saw some with their necks almost severed by a sword-cut. One I saw whose whole chest had been skinned, his fore-arms had been cut off, while the upper arm was skinned of flesh. I asked if the dogs had done this. "No, the Turks did it with their knives." A dozen bodies were half

burned. All the corpses had been rifled of all their clothes except a cotton under-garment or two. These white under-clothes were stained with the blood of the dead, presenting a fearful sight. The faces of many were disfigured beyond recognition, and all had been thrown down, face foremost, in the dust of the streets and the mud of the gutters, so that all were black with clotted blood and dust. Some were stark naked, and everybody seemed to have at least two wounds, and some a dozen. In this list of dead there were only three women, two babies, a number of young children, and about thirty young boys of fifteen to twenty.

‘A crowd of a thousand people, mostly Armenians, watched me taking photographs of their dead. Many were weeping beside their dead fathers or husbands. The Armenian photographer saw two children, relatives of his, among the dead. Some Armenian workmen were engaged excavating a deep trench twenty feet square close by, to bury the corpses. Here, too, was a peculiar scene. The space of this trench contained many graves, and on one side were a number of skulls, perhaps twenty in all, and a pile of bones found in the excavating. I left the sad sight sick at heart.’

Will none of these mournful sights and sounds move, in any degree, the heart and conscience of the British nation, and constrain us to prompt and vigorous action? Alas! for many thousands

of Armenians now sleeping their last sleep in those rude trenches, for many thousands more wearing out a few days of hopeless degradation, there is no effective service we can now render! The opportunity has been for ever lost.

Yet still, ere the brutal Turk make a full end, is there no sympathy in Christian hearts, in the heart of Great Britain, no dread of the inevitable retribution, to constrain us to call, as with the blast of a trumpet, for a prompt and final arrest on these orgies of death and dishonour worse than death? There is assuredly no time to lose. It is now or never that authoritative summons must sound forth.

Abdul Hamid still sits secure in the recesses of the Yildiz Kiosk — free to organize fresh massacres. Not one of the perpetrators of the outrages on the Armenians has been punished for his crimes. The more prominent of them have been decorated in token of imperial favour.

Yet the solemn farce of Commissions of Inquiry goes on, and our Government is content to simulate approval of the action which His Majesty has been good enough to take.

Apart from all consideration of the claims and interests of the Armenians, our own vaunted British interests, our prestige in the East demand that it should not be understood that the Sultan has escaped the penalty of his long arrears of flagrant crimes, and of his studied insults to this country. An attitude of complicity with the

foulest crimes which have disgraced the history of the world has been and is being forced upon the British nation. Are we for ever to stand idly by and see, without one generous impulse, the still protracted agony of the Christians we have pledged our honour to protect? Has not the time arrived for England to show that she feels acutely that she has been acting out of character, and must now resume her proper *rôle*, which is not that of the smiling friend and ally of the blood-stained tyrant, but the liberator of his miserable victim?

Is true freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake,
And, with leathern hearts, forget
That we owe mankind a debt?
No! true freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And, with heart and hand, to be
Earnest to make others free!

THE END.



